

Ballyhoo



Jeff Culbert ed.

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Herman Goodden, London Free Press As an actor and director, the founder and artistic director of Ausable Theatre, a playwright and weekly columnist on matters theatrical in The Londoner, as well as the editor of the Theatre in London Web site, Jeff Culbert is a cherubically smiling dynamo who never seems to break a sweat while keeping all these projects spinning simultaneously. It's hard to think of Culbert without picturing one of those jugglers with a fleet of whirling dinner plates atop sticks on the old Ed Sullivan Show. Except Culbert's locks are a curly, Little Orphan Annie-style mop.

It can't be as easy as Culbert makes it all look, yet the man exudes such an infectious love for what he's doing that you can't help envying his crushingly frantic work schedule. With a generosity of spirit that puts me in mind of the late Greg Curnoe's tireless advocacy for all London visual artists, Culbert similarly seeks to spread the glory around by calling as much attention as he can to the unprecedented explosion of original scripts and independent productions underway in London, Ont. With the assistance of the London chapter of the Canadian Poetry Association, the London Arts Council and the City of London, Culbert has just edited and published Ballyhoo 2001, a bounteous, 200-page compendium of 10 recent scripts by eight London playwrights, all of which saw production in just that year.

Many premiered at the London Fringe Theatre Festival (then in its second year), a wonderful spur for small-scale, indigenous productions that couldn't have come along at a more propitious time. The scripts gathered here include two by the incredibly prolific Jayson McDonald. The Man Behind the Mask is episode 65 in his Boneyard Man series, which is a good-hearted send-up of live radio serials of the '30s. McDonald's Subterrain, my favourite script in Ballyhoo, is a witty and thoughtful examination of the dynamics of social coercion when an underground king dies without an heir and different factions struggle for control of the ship of state. Culbert's own play, Running Rude (about environmental activists on a consciousness-raising tear) and Jason Rip's Core (a raunchy examination of London street life by night), also stand out, as does J. G. De Souza's Theseus in the Labyrinth; a post-modern retelling of the heroic myth in which the dreaded Minotaur might not even exist.

A few quibbles could be launched. In an otherwise handsomely designed book, the print is uncomfortably small and fills the entire pages, not leaving much breathing space in the margins. This is particularly trying in the centre or gutter, necessitating that you splay the book more forcefully than is usually advisable with a paperback in order to make out all the text. A little more space would also allow headers at the top of each page, identifying which script was printed below, and making it easier for readers to find their way.

One more set of editorial eyeballs would have caught some pretty obvious typos, and there is also the odd dropped word or phrase. None of these flaws impede the sense of the stories, but they're something to watch out for if Culbert is going to make Ballyhoo an annual or bi-annual summing up. Which I sincerely hope he does because Culbert is quite right. There isn't a livelier art form in London right now and the boggling richness of our independent theatre scene deserves this kind of permanent commemoration.

Already on sale for \$20 a copy at Attic Books, the Oxford Book Shop and The Last Word (at the Central Library), there will be an official launch party for Ballyhoo on July 17, 7:30 p.m., at Wolf Performance Hall.

Herman Goodden is a London freelance writer. His column appears in Monday's and Thursday's Opinion pages. It no longer appears in Sunday's A&E section. He can be e-mailed at herman.goodden@sympatico.ca.

***Amelia at the Forks of Ayzhkanzeebee:
Propriety and Passion***

an original one act stage play

June 3, 2002

by Leith Peterson

London, Ontario, Canada

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Amelia at the Forks of Ayzhkanzeebee: Propriety and Passion premiered in the drawing room of Eldon House, an historic site in London, Ontario, Canada. There were four productions on February 18 and 25, 2001. The play was produced by Museum London, which oversees Eldon House, with the following cast:

Amelia Harris: Mary Ann Gibbons

John Wilson

Mike Gibbons

Directed by:

Doreen Glover

Stage Manager:

Trish Poce

Amelia at the Forks of Ayzhkanzeebee: Propriety and Passion

Time: February 19, 1860

Setting: Drawing Room of Harris home in London, Canada West. House is commonly referred to as "Eldon House".

(Amelia Harris is sitting by the fireplace at one end of the drawing room. Beside her is a large tea service and a plate of scones. A plate of small meringues are over on the side table. She is just feeling the teapot to see how warm it is, when she hears the maid, Kathryn, welcoming someone in the hallway. She gets up from her chair to see who it is. She can hear a familiar Scottish voice say "Good afternoon, Kathryn". She smiles, but as she goes to the doorway, she puts her hand to her heart, as if startled deeply by something. The Honourable John Wilson, lawyer and sometimes politician, comes boldly through the door, smiling broadly and carrying a book..)

AMELIA: Mr Wilson, welcome to Eldon House. (she sees something behind him and gasps)

WILSON: (Grabs her hand) Mrs Harris, is something the matter?

AMELIA: (keeps looking out the doorway, with his hand grasping hers gently. Then she composes herself and draws her hand away from his slowly and turns her back on him to collect herself. She looks out the window towards the garden) No, nothing, Mr Wilson.

WILSON: You look like you've seen a ghost.

AMELIA: (Turns to look out window) It is only Sunday afternoon, and I have already seen or heard of too many.

WILSON: Ah yes, your birthday has fallen on the blessed Sabbath this year.

(Wilson goes to the window, partly to look out, but partly to see Amelia's face. He eyes her gently before looking out the window)

AMELIA: I planted some Pink roots in September. They should be glorious as they peak their little shoots out of the snow in April.

WILSON: Yes, the joys of spring are on their way. (he hands a book to Amelia) Happy anniversary of your birthday.

AMELIA: (Takes the book, admires it) Benvenuto Cellini, his autobiography, how splendid. You said you had read it and how much you enjoyed it.

WILSON: I am pleased for you to have my copy. Cellini was a very talented artist, sculptor. A man of his time--impetuous, brave, violent--totally committed to his art.

AMELIA: What was his time?

WILSON: The sixteenth century.

AMELIA: He was violent?

WILSON: Killed three men, but all in the line of duty, one might say.

AMELIA: I have heard that Berlioz has written an opera about him.

WILSON: Really?

AMELIA: First in France, then the Italian version, at Covent Garden, several years ago, in the presence of the Queen and Prince Consort.

WILSON: How was the version in England received?

AMELIA: It was hissed more than heard.

WILSON: Perhaps the stodgy English are not ready.

AMELIA: You always have a barb for the English, Mr Wilson.

WILSON: As many good Scotsmen do.

AMELIA: To think opera was mounted at our City Hall only a year ago.

WILSON: With the suffocating English presence in this town, it is likely our own opera backwater will not welcome Cellini for many years to come.

AMELIA: Backwater?

WILSON: Despite Simcoe's efforts, York was chosen, as you know.

AMELIA: Such a disappointment. Being the capital would have done so much for this city. It has been so dull since the Red Coats left.

WILSON: Well, you certainly did not act like things were dull when I entered. Are you ready to talk about it?

AMELIA: Not yet. (pause) Would you care for some tea and scones?

WILSON: Indeed.

(Amelia pours some tea for Mr Wilson and herself. She hands the tea to Mr Wilson and places her own tea beside her.)

AMELIA: I'm afraid I can't offer you a glass of wine. The maid has been watering it so, I'm embarrassed to serve it.

WILSON: I rarely put liquor to my lips. Tea is my favorite beverage.

AMELIA: I'm sure you are a better man for it. (he smiles) You always have a smile for me.

WILSON: (smiles again) A smile for a friend.

AMELIA: Or a worthy opponent?

WILSON: Are you suggesting that I, John Wilson, your faithful lawyer -

AMELIA: And not so faithful politician.

WILSON: Would want to spar with a woman of intellect on a Sunday afternoon?

AMELIA: It is my birthday, Mr Wilson, please be kind.

WILSON: Your sharp tongue is well known whether it's your birthday or not.

AMELIA: You are forthright in your views, which is not always wise.

WILSON: Ah, that's what I like, a good-natured spat with my dear Mrs H. It is so easy to get you riled. Whereas, Elizabeth, well, she's hard to spark.

AMELIA: How long have you been married?

WILSON: Too long.

AMELIA: (amused) Let us change subjects.

WILSON: What have you done so far on this special day?

AMELIA: I went to church with my daughter and her husband in their sleigh.

WILSON: Helen and Mr Portman?

AMELIA: Yes. Bishop Cronyn preached on life after death. (pause) Do you believe in life--after death--I mean?

WILSON: I suppose the scriptures tell us we should.

AMELIA: After church, I opened my Bible and read from the lesson. (she goes to the Bible and moves to a section she has bookmarked) This is Saint John, Chapter 5, Verses 28 and 29 (she starts reading) "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (she puts the Bible down)

WILSON: (looks at her, quizzically)

AMELIA: (she goes over to the doorway, hesitantly, but determinedly, and looks out. She breathes a sigh of relief and retraces her steps back into the drawing room) When you entered the doorway awhile ago, I saw a ghost behind you.

WILSON: An apparition?

AMELIA: That of a man. A man taller than yourself. He was wearing a waistcoat of the most expensive kind, but not a cut that is commonly worn these days. I remember my husband used to wear such a coat.

WILSON: Your husband, returned from the grave?

AMELIA: Oh no, it is not my dear John. (she glances longingly at a portrait of John on the wall, then moves away) No, it is a stranger, someone I have never cast eyes on before.

WILSON: You speak as if the ghost is still here.

AMELIA: He could be.

WILSON: It is well known that Eldon House has a resident spirit.

AMELIA: Which appeared only once and many years ago. I do not believe that this is the same apparition.

WILSON: Well, what could it be?

AMELIA: I am not sure. But the fact that it appeared on your arrival -

WILSON: Just a coincidence.

AMELIA: I do not think so.

WILSON: (amused) Let us talk about the other ghost for a moment, when did it appear?

AMELIA: My dear Sarah was being courted by a young man named Wenman Wynniatt. He was a Lieutenant in the 83rd Regiment of Foot. Such a dashing Red Coat. (pause) Mr Harris and I invited him to a party here; it was a Friday evening. At 6 o'clock, Sarah was talking to Ensign Anderson and myself when we saw Mr Wynniatt standing in that doorway (she motions to the doorway). He looked at Sarah, in a cold but steady manner, and then passed into the dining room. She thought it odd he did not come over to speak to her. She told us she thought Mr Wynniatt was very rude, and followed him into the dining room. But he was not -- (she pauses)

WILSON: Go on.

AMELIA: Not there. The next morning, Mr Harris asked us if we had seen Mr Wynniatt the night before. We said yes, but he had acted very strangely. Then Mr Harris told us Wynniatt's servant had just come here to inquire about his master. He said he had been instructed to lay out evening clothes for a party here. The lieutenant said he would probably be back in the early hours of the morning. (pause) Mr Harris enquired around the town. Ensign Portal said that around 5 o'clock Friday evening, he had seen Wynniatt taking a ride on horseback along the Thames, towards Jennings' saw mill. But the servant said that around 7 that same evening, the young man's riderless horse returned home.

WILSON: And then?

AMELIA: The next morning, the entire garrison, and hundreds of civilians searched hour by hour. When it was learned the horse's saddle was much wetted, they decided to explore the river. Finally on Sunday, around noon, Mr Schram and the Messrs Schofield, accompanied by two Indian guides who knew the area well, saw something as they paddled down the Thames. There was a body covered with sand, at the bottom. It is believed Mr Wynniatt attempted to ford the river and his horse had reared up, causing him to drown.

WILSON: How tragic.

AMELIA: But the strangest thing is that when they found Mr Wynniatt's watch on his body, it had stopped at 6 o'clock (pause)

WILSON: Was it not 6 when you -

AMELIA: I remember how it frightened Sarah, all of us (she looks nervous) But I am sure it is not - (looks in the doorway again)

WILSON: There, there, Mrs Harris. Do not think of this apparition. You got caught up too much in today's sermon, and started to imagine things when you got home.

AMELIA: Do you think I am just a widow who is fantasizing?

WILSON: No, I am suggesting that the sermon caused you to dwell on things a trifle too much, and created an atmosphere which was conducive to this incident.

AMELIA: I do not agree with your suggestion.

WILSON: (trying to make light of the situation) Or perhaps you've grown bored with the old Eldon House ghost and have decided to create a new one?

AMELIA: Nothing of the sort. (pause) I suspect there is something about your present situation that has caused the ghost to make an appearance. (pause) Have you any enemies?

WILSON: (humouring her) A lawyer always has a few.

AMELIA: What about dead enemies?

WILSON: Amelia, this is preposterous.

AMELIA: I still feel a presence.

WILSON: And I feel like I need some sustenance.

(he takes a big bite of scone and a sip of tea)

AMELIA: What about the man you killed?

WILSON: (looks shocked)

AMELIA: You said Cellini killed three men and his murders were all in the line of duty. What about your murder?

WILSON: It was not a murder; it was a duel.

AMELIA: And yet you won Elizabeth as a result of it but you have never told me the story.

WILSON: It is one too often told.

AMELIA: But not to me.

WILSON: I would rather not. You know (he laughs) with your talk of ghosts, you are reminding me of something. When I was a young lad growing up in Scotland, there used to be these brownies who haunted the farmhouses -

AMELIA: Brownies?

WILSON: Your Irish maid would call them leprechauns. They haunted not just our family farm, but all the farms in the area. Our brownie was a grotesque but strong little creature. During the day, he was unseen and idle, but at night...

AMELIA: And you think my apparition is strange?

WILSON: My mother would leave out work for him, supper dishes to be washed, the churn to be prepared, and he never failed to have the whole done by the morn. He would accept no wages, and in fact to do so would have insured his anger, and perhaps caused him to abandon the establishment.

AMELIA: What does this have to do with - ?

WILSON: Sometimes, my father would tell stories to us children, about the brownies. We would be

frightened. And then my mother would place some herbs under our pillows and say that this would keep all the bad spirits away. Perhaps I should inquire about these herbs for you, that they could be laid under your pillow. One night of this and all these visions will I'm sure vanish from your lovely eyes.

AMELIA: I think you are the one who should have herbs placed under his pillow. (she goes towards Mr Wilson and takes his hand gingerly, examining his nails)

WILSON: What are you doing?

AMELIA: Examining your fingernails. (looks closely, holding up a couple of fingers to her eyes, then lets go of his hand slowly) Yes I do see a couple of spots.

WILSON: Spots? (he looks at the fingernails for the spots)

AMELIA: When I was a child in Port Ryerse, we had a physician who said that spots on the fingernails were fit premonitions of coming evil spirits.

WILSON: That is ridiculous

AMELIA: As ridiculous as your brownies?

WILSON: Brownies are real.

AMELIA: And so is what I saw in the doorway. (pause) Mr Wilson, we have been friends for many years, even before my husband died. In the decade since his tragic departure, I have come to value our relationship.

WILSON: And I yours.

AMELIA: When I went to your home for heavy tea last spring, everything looked so nice. The grounds were in such good order, the flowers were beautiful and the shrubs and every thing seemed so abundant. I looked around at all which seemed conducive to worldly comfort and yet I felt you were alone in the world.

WILSON: Ah, but I am not alone. I have the plants, the trees.

AMELIA: Your garden is at the back where it cannot be admired, and you have only one gardener. You should put it at the front, and hire more servants.

WILSON: But then there would be no enjoyment for me. I like to get my hands in the earth, to seed, to take pride in watching the flowers grow. I know all my trees and their history. They are my friends.

AMELIA: But not your wife? I do not understand, if you won Elizabeth in a duel, why you have no feelings for her, or her for you. After all, private combat can be of high example, even for kings. I am intrigued.

WILSON: (reluctantly) It was when I was a law student in Perth. I was quite enamoured of Elizabeth at that time, even wrote a poem about her.

AMELIA: Oh let's hear the poem.

(As Wilson recites the poem, it is clear he is thinking more of Amelia than Elizabeth)

WILSON: 'Tis true there's one bewitching being,
And one whom I can scarce help seeing,
Who makes me every time we meet
Fain to say something wondrous sweet.

(Wilson stops abruptly, as if embarrassed) That's enough. (pause) She was very beautiful.

AMELIA: (displays a bit of jealousy) To write poetry for her.

WILSON: As nature or, rather, inclination, had not fitted me for shining in the female circle, I had to content myself with the hope of one day meeting a female who had sense enough to value worth although peeled of the showy glitter. I was of lowly origin by Perth's standards. I had to make up for it with verse.

AMELIA: How charming.

WILSON: Would you like to hear the poem I wrote for my mother? It is very beautiful.

AMELIA: No, Mr Wilson, I want to hear about the duel.

(Mr Wilson takes a bite of scone, then a sip of tea. He thinks for a moment, as if recalling the incident)

WILSON: (reluctantly) My tutor, Mr Boulton, was impressed with my work. He sent me to Bytown to establish a branch office of his legal practice. While I was there this fellow law student, Robert Lyon, paid

me a visit. He told me that he had conspired with a Miss Caroline Thom to put my Elizabeth in a compromising position. He allowed Mr Lelievre and Elizabeth to secretly meet. Lelievre supposedly put his arms about her in a position which no woman of spirit would permit. I was incensed.

AMELIA: I imagine you must have been furious.

WILSON: I had been contemptuously treated because of my humble origin. I wished to prove my moral superiority by exposing the truth to my friend Ackland. I wrote to him in Perth.

AMELIA: That letter would be a terrible embarrassment for the women, if it were known.

WILSON: Ackland, the fool, showed it to Boulton, who was a brother-in-law to Miss Thom. Boulton discussed the matter with Miss Thom. She became quite agitated and reprimanded Lyon. Lyon then read my letter and insisted it was all a joke to make me jealous.

A few days later, I returned to Perth to discover my letter to Ackland had become the centre of public controversy. I was furious with Ackland for presenting my letter to my tutor and of course Lyon was upset. I tried to reconcile with Lyon, but that louse knocked me to the ground in front of everyone. My face was cut and bruised.

AMELIA: My heavens!

WILSON: He called me a "damned lying scoundrel".

AMELIA: What did you do?

WILSON: I still tried to reconcile with him, but when he refused to offer me an apology, I challenged him to a contest of honour.

AMELIA: Like that?

WILSON: Death itself was less terrifying than the scowls and reproaches of a mocking town. The date was set. Lyon, the cad, chose Lelievre as his second.

AMELIA: And your second?

WILSON: Simon Fraser Robertson, another law student. The four of us trudged three quarters of a mile from town to a ploughed field on the banks of the Tay. Not far behind trailed a whole range of people, both the well-meaning and the gossips. (gets up from his chair, starts to reenact the event). We arrived at the appointed time, and faced each other. As we raised our pistols, dark clouds covered the sky, and the thunder roared as if signaling God's displeasure. Then the rain poured down in torrents. The first two shots were fired and a bullet passed my temple, brushing aside a lock of my hair.

AMELIA: My word! (the thought of someone harming Wilson obviously causes her strong feelings for him to surface)

WILSON: Robertson approached Lelievre with a piece of paper containing an apology for Lyon to sign. Lelievre said he was not agreeable to it and handed it to Lyon, who, when it had been read, cast it aside and said he would "have another shot first".

I saw Lyon's pistol in line with my heart. (pause) I shuddered and (pause). When the signal was given, I pulled the trigger but turned my face away. There was a nauseating crack in the cool dusk air. And through the smoke, I saw Lyon on the ground, gasping. The shot pierced his lungs, under his uplifted arm.

AMELIA: And he was - ?

WILSON: That coward Lelievre made his escape, but Robertson and I returned to town, delivering ourselves up to justice. (pauses, walks towards fireplace) We were later sent to Brockville for trial, charged with murder. For six weeks we were detained in jail.

AMELIA: Six weeks? How did you pass the time?

(Wilson reflects back in time. He knows Amelia is upset, and wants to lighten up the atmosphere by reading poetry from his youth which he knows now in retrospect is quite funny. He adjusts his vest or moves an ornament in the room to heighten this desired change in mood.)

WILSON: I met with my minister for spiritual guidance, wrote letters, poetry. (pause) Let me see if I can remember -

Hail, heavenly Hope! Delightful balm.

'Tis thou alone our griefs canst calm,

And light our checkered way.
When sorrows like stern winter's blast
Our brightest prospects overcast
Thou pour'st thy cheering way.

When bitterest pangs of keen distress
Our throbbing breasts with sadness press
And swell with heaving throes
Thy magic power and angel voice -

AMELIA: Mr Wilson, please, the trial.

WILSON: Oh yes. The Brockville Assizes arrived and we were tried before Chief Justice Macauley. The court room was overflowing with spectators, including some respectable females. I defended myself to the best of my ability.

AMELIA: And what was your defence?

WILSON: I said I felt no malice towards the victim.

AMELIA: Wording inspired by your law books?

WILSON: (pretends to ignore this comment) Great enthusiasm was shown for Robertson and myself and we received many words of encouragement and offers of assistance. The jury acquitted us unanimously.

AMELIA: Because of the eloquence in court you are so noted for.

WILSON: There was surprise we were not found guilty of manslaughter. This was one time I was grateful to the Irish. They made up the jury and considered fighting commendable, rather than a crime.

AMELIA: Something nice about the Irish, from you.

WILSON: (pause) Why do you think I married Elizabeth?

AMELIA: That is something only you can answer.

WILSON: It was a vulgar brawl, a pompous intervention in her life. It impaired her opportunities for teaching and courtship. By marrying her, I repaired her reputation, and I was exonerated, as it was seen to be romantic. I had no choice. (pause) I married Elizabeth in the spring of '35. (pause) I have never told anyone this, but each year, on the anniversary of the duel, I lock myself in my room and will not speak to anyone. I am sure Elizabeth suspects...

AMELIA: Yes?

WILSON: You believe marriages are made in heaven, but my own was made in the other place.

AMELIA: Your marriage was not built on a strong foundation.

WILSON: If only Lyon had not spread that ugly lie, none of this would have happened. Elizabeth still curses him.

AMELIA: I'm sure it is difficult for you both, but (she is distracted; she looks at the doorway again, holds her hand to her heart)

WILSON: What is it?

AMELIA: Do you find it rather cold in here suddenly?

WILSON: Why yes, there is a draft.

AMELIA: Please Mr Wilson, look around the doorway. I am sure I saw the ghost again.

WILSON: (goes over to the doorway again, looks around and returns smiling) It is just a draft through the open window in the morning room. And the sun is playing with the trees, causing the light to flutter.

AMELIA: Are you certain?

WILSON: (feigned seriousness) Perhaps it is the spirit of Lyon.

AMELIA: Ah yes, I do suspect that.

WILSON: And he is haunting me, not you.

AMELIA: That does make sense.

WILSON: (laughing) There, there, Amelia. I am joking.

AMELIA: And perhaps you are not. As I said, the apparition appeared on your arrival, someone I have never seen. Over six feet. Was Lyon tall?

WILSON: Yes, he was of some height, but, these things can all be logically explained. Be strong and laugh at this; I was only trying to amuse you with a tall tale.

AMELIA: I hope this ghost, Mr Lyon, the man you killed, will see fit to forgive you and leave you in

WILSON: (laughing) Ah Mrs H, what an imagination you have.

AMELIA: I am not inclined to think that disembodied spirits indulge in meaningless frivolities. Just as the Bishop explained this morning, there are restless souls who are unable to pass over to the afterlife. Something or someone is keeping Lyon's spirit trapped between this world and the next.

WILSON: You are reminding me.

AMELIA: Well?

WILSON: Lyon had lodged with a Mrs Glass before his (pause) demise. One morning, he awoke and told her he dreamed he had treaded past the burying ground wearing his grave clothes. Mrs Glass said to think nothing of it, but the same dream persisted, night after night, until Lyon was sure it would happen.

AMELIA: He knew you were going to slay him.

WILSON: On his way to the duel he and his party went by the back of town, to escape observation. They went through the graveyard. Lyon told Lelievre his body would soon be buried there, that he was ready.

AMELIA: How did you learn this?

WILSON: Lelievre revealed the incident many years later.

AMELIA: Well, this is further indication that -

WILSON: And Lyon also said (pause)

AMELIA: Go on.

WILSON: Lyon told Lelievre that he would come back from the grave for me.

AMELIA: Every word that you speak convinces me more (she looks towards the doorway) I believe the dead watch the living. I believe he is watching you now.

WILSON: (seeing that she is getting serious again, attempts to lighten the mood with the following overdramatized remarks, intending to be funny) Mrs Harris, this is too much for me. My heart is giving out from the strain. Let us move on to another subject and put this matter behind us.

AMELIA: All right, Mr Wilson, I will try to ignore what I see.

WILSON: How are your memoirs coming along?

AMELIA: Egerton Ryerson -

WILSON: Your cousin.

AMELIA: Wanted to include them in a book, so I persevered. And they were published last year. The two volumes are called The Loyalists of America and Their Times.

WILSON: Why did you not tell me this? You are being far too modest.

AMELIA: I guess I neglected to mention it to you.

WILSON: Your memoirs make me think of Cellini. As you will see from his autobiography (picks up the autobiography and opens it to the front), the first paragraph reads: "All men of whatsoever quality they may be, who have done anything of excellence, if they are persons of honesty, [should] describe their life in their own hand". Surely your life is of excellence and honesty. That is why I admire you so.

AMELIA: More than your wife? (she turns her back to him and moves away to hide her feelings)

WILSON: Amelia (moves towards her) I believe you know the answer.

AMELIA: (feels deeply attracted by his presence near her, but then slowly, reluctantly, moves farther away) Kathryn is here, Mr Wilson, and I am sure other visitors will be arriving shortly.

WILSON: (he moves back, reluctantly) I wish we could be more than friends.

AMELIA: I am glad you have told me about the problems with your marriage. I understand you better now.

WILSON: If only it could be more than understanding.

AMELIA: You were asking me about my memoirs. (she picks up her memoirs) Do you mind if I read

from them?

WILSON: (motions his approval)

AMELIA: (reading from the memoirs) Captain Samuel Ryerse, one of the early settlers of Canada, was a descendant of an old Dutch family in New Jersey. When the Rebellion commenced in 1776, the British government was anxious to raise provincial troops. My father found no difficulty in enlisting double the number required, and was gazetted captain of the 4th Battalion New Jersey volunteers in which regiment he had served with distinction during the Seven Years War. After the acknowledgement of American independence by England, the British government offered the troops a free transport to New Brunswick and a grant of land. On my father's arrival in New Brunswick, he obtained a lot of land and met my mother, who was a refugee also, and they married. After suffering many hardships, they eventually settled in Port Ryerse.

WILSON: That is southeast of here, is it not?

AMELIA: Yes. (pauses; puts down the memoirs, and walks towards her portrait on the wall of the drawing room) A log cabin was built. One bitter night in February 1798, Granny McColl was brought by ox-team and shortly after she arrived, the birth of a daughter was announced. That daughter is now making this record of the past.

(Amelia is now looking at her portrait. She pauses and looks at Mr Wilson)

WILSON: What a marvelous account. You certainly do not look your age. I would have guessed you a score years younger. (he glances over at Amelia's portrait) Mr Wandesforde does you justice.

AMELIA: You flatter me, Mr Wilson.

WILSON: Please continue.

AMELIA: The greatest good feeling existed among the settlers, although they were from all nations and creeds. The Quakers and Yonkers were among the best settlers because they were peaceable and industrious.

WILSON: What about the Indians?

AMELIA: It was not an uncommon occurrence for them to steal children. During the summer, there used to be hundreds encamped on the beach. My mother was terribly worried one time when my brother George disappeared. We searched for him everywhere. At last his hat was found in the creek. My mother sat perfectly quiet on the bank, with feelings not easily described, while my father probed the deep holes, and thrust his spear under the driftwood, expecting every time he drew it out to see George's red frock rise to the surface. Then she heard with delight a little voice say "Mamma" from the opposite side of the creek. There was George, his little bare head peeping through the bushes and his pet cat by his side. The reaction was too much for my mother; she fell fainting to the ground. She was so glad the Indians had not taken him.

WILSON: What about his hat?

AMELIA: He had lost it walking over a log which the men used as a bridge.

WILSON: So you lived in fear of the Indians?

AMELIA: No, not usually. The Mohawks and Cayugas at Grand River were kind and inoffensive in their manner, and would take the traveler across the river or part with their products for a very small reward. One year, there was a total failure of the grain crops. The Indians alone had preserved the maize from destruction by the raccoons, squirrels and bears. The settlers now had to depend on the natives for bread and the Indians continued to sell their maize at the same price as formerly, and during the year, scarcely ever raised it. No, the nature of these people is not all bad. Mr Harris and I learned that when we were in Vittoria. We bought some beautiful artwork from them. Their beadwork is exquisite.

WILSON: Yes, the art of a conquered people. When we are at war, some of the tribes can be useful to us as allies, but at any other time -

AMELIA: The tribes who are Loyalists deserve the protection of the Crown. They defended us from the Americans.

WILSON: Protection does not extend to certain things.

AMELIA: Such as?

WILSON: They want us to keep their Indian names for all these places. That is ridiculous! Their words are too hard to pronounce. I hear they even wanted to keep the Indian name for the Thames.

AMELIA: Ayzhkanzeebee, Antler River, because it is in the shape of an antler.

WILSON: Your pronunciation is very good.

AMELIA: I was on the reservation buying baskets years ago. The Chippewa chief came and spoke with me. He told me the river's name and asked me to repeat it until I could say it perfectly--Ayzhkanzeebee. The Indians make very good baskets, you know. The maids use them when they go shopping.

WILSON: So they are good at baskets and beadwork. But they do not fit in to our society. They are often in the way.

AMELIA: And yet there is an Indian who holds a very important position in this town. Did you know that the mother of Col John Askin was an Indian woman from west of Detroit?

WILSON: Yes, that issue sometimes comes up in the council chambers, in not so pleasant a fashion. Indian Askin he's called. His father was Irish. He has the characteristics of both the Celt and the Indian and they do not harmonize. The volatile nature of the one is in constant conflict with the cold impassivity of the other. He is not the most agreeable man to have dealings with.

AMELIA: Why would that be? I thought he was filling his position as Clerk of the County Court and Clerk of the Peace in an admirable manner.

WILSON: Oh, I am sure during his frequent visits to your home, he embellishes his great deeds to make a good impression.

AMELIA: I sensed from a remark by Col Askin that you are not the best of friends.

WILSON: He has been hostile towards me ever since I questioned his handling of county funds, over 20 years ago--so far in the past and yet he still holds a grudge. Askin will never bury the tomahawk.

AMELIA: Yet Col Askin, along with yourself, did much to suppress the '37 Rebellion. It was Askin who destroyed the press and type of the St. Thomas Liberal; he took part in the action against Duncombe and the other rebels. He has proven his loyalty to the Crown, and he is always a welcome guest in my home.

WILSON: My, you can manipulate.

AMELIA: As you can be stubborn.

WILSON: The man was getting too powerful and had to be checked.

AMELIA: Askin has earned his power.

WILSON: We are straying very far from your memoirs. What was your father's occupation in Port Ryerse?

AMELIA: On my father's arrival in the country he had been sworn in as justice of the peace, for London and later the Western districts. Courts were first held at Sandwich, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, without roads, so that magistrates had to settle disputes as best they could, perform all marriages, bury the dead and prescribe for the sick. My father purchased a pair of tooth pullers and learned to draw teeth, to the great relief of the suffering. So popular did he become that in later years they used to entreat him to draw their teeth, in preference to a medical man. The one did it gratuitously, the other, of course, charged.

WILSON: Tell me about the marriages.

AMELIA: Marriages that took place at my father's used to afford a great deal of amusement. The only fee my father asked was a kiss from the bride, which he always insisted on being paid; and if the bride was at all pretty he used, with a mischievous look at my mother, to enlarge upon the pleasure that this fee gave him, and would go into raptures about the bride's youth, beauty, and freshness, and declare that it was the only public duty that he was properly remunerated for.

WILSON: How long was your father a justice of the peace?

AMELIA: (change in mood) In 1810, my father showed signs of failing health. A life of hardship and great exertion was telling upon a naturally strong constitution. So he decided upon resigning all his offices.

WILSON: Do your memoirs address your overstated loyalty to Britain?

AMELIA: It is not overstated. If you knew what happened, you would better understand.

WILSON: Then please explain.

AMELIA: I was living with my widowed mother in Port Ryerse, shortly before my marriage. There were several days of heavy fog. When it lifted, we saw eight ships under the American Flag anchored off Ryerse.

WILSON: The War of 1812?

AMELIA: Yes (pause) As my mother and I were sitting at breakfast, the dogs kept up an unusual barking. I went to the door to discover the cause. I looked up and saw the hillside and fields, as far as the eye could reach, covered with American soldiers. Two men stepped from the ranks, selected some large chips, and came into the room where we were standing. They took coals from the hearth without speaking a word. My mother knew what they were going to do. She went out to see the commanding officer. He rode up to her and identified himself. She entreated him to spare her property, and said she was a widow with a young family. He answered her civilly and respectfully, and expressed his regret that his orders were to burn, that our buildings were being used as a barrack and the mill was furnishing flour for the British troops. Very soon we saw columns of dark smoke arising from every building, and of what at early morn had been a prosperous homestead, at noon there remained only smouldering ruins. WILSON: They burned everything?

AMELIA: They spared our home, thank the Lord. My father had been dead less than two years. Little remained of all his labours except the orchard and cultivated fields. It would not be easy to describe my mother's feelings as she looked at the desolation around her. I promised her I would always honour the British cause, and I always will.

WILSON: Your loyalty is explained, but -

AMELIA: My mother was born in New York. After the burning, she no longer had a desire to return. (she moves towards the doorway, reluctantly, looking for signs of the ghost. She looks upon the large clock outside the doorway entrance) This beautiful clock is one of my only treasures from Port Ryerse. I brought it here to remind me.

WILSON: (testing her) Speaking of being reminded, is the ghost still around?

AMELIA: No (she looks towards the doorway) he has disappeared -

WILSON: Good.

AMELIA: For now. Perhaps it was wise for us to move from the topic of the duel, which I am sure enraged him.

WILSON: (amused) Yes, we do not want to rouse again the ire of his ghostship. Well then. (thinks quickly of an alternate subject) I have been meaning to ask you for some time about, about your work on the maps, when your husband was in the Royal Navy.

AMELIA: Just a fortnight after our wedding, Sir Richard Owen assigned my husband to a hydrographic survey of the Great Lakes. We moved to Kingston where I presided over the domestic affairs at the headquarters of the survey. Captain Owen was a hundred miles east and my husband was two hundred miles west, at Niagara, and the other officers were scattered over the lake, surveying. Captain Owen would send me instructions on how to regulate my time and when to perform certain operations. His favorite piece of advice was "wisdom is but for the management of time".

WILSON: How fascinating.

AMELIA: I helped prepare draft maps of the surveyed areas on oil paper. Once I had to trace the Thousand Islands, that was very difficult. Mr Harris emphasized that I had to be accurate. He used to address letters to me as "Mrs A Harris, Deputy Assistant Marine Surveyor and Housekeeper to the Establishment".

WILSON: Really? Well, this is yet further evidence that you are very accomplished as well as beautiful.

AMELIA: (looks at the plate of scones) Would you care for some more scones? Or, would you care for some kisses?

WILSON: (smiles broadly, moves towards Amelia)

AMELIA: (as Wilson moves towards her, Amelia turns around and produces some kisses, which are small meringues, from a side table) These kind of kisses, Mr Wilson.

WILSON: (disappointed) Oh yes (he takes one) You know what I like most about you? (He moves towards a table where a diary is placed and picks it up, starts to leaf through it)

AMELIA: Please tell.

WILSON: The fact that you are so bold as to keep your diary out for any curious eye to examine. What

is your purpose?

AMELIA: To instruct.

WILSON: And to sermonize?

AMELIA: My entries are not sermons. I am simply trying to show the importance of aristocratic values and loving bearing. You have been reading it?

WILSON: Certainly.

AMELIA: Well, you are like one of the family.

WILSON: I especially note the comments pertaining to myself. For instance, my political views. (he leafs through until he finds the page he wants) Oh yes, (he reads) "Mr Wilson's standard of right and wrong was so clear and so high when he first came to London and now he will do what he knows to be wrong for the party".

AMELIA: During the '37 Rebellion, you still had high principles. Remember when you worked with my husband to crush the zealots?

WILSON: Yes, shortly after I came to London.

AMELIA: And the Caroline. Every time I walk through the library and see the picture of the burning sailboat -

WILSON: Yes, John was the one who discovered the Caroline was ferrying men and arms between the rebel encampment on Navy Island and Fort Schlossar, New York.

AMELIA: Forty-one Canadians in seven boats, under the command of Captain Drew, boarded the vessel when it was docked on the American side. They cut it free, and as it drifted away, they set it ablaze.

WILSON: The rebels threatened to kill him and burn down Eldon House.

AMELIA: And Bishop Cronyn's home. That meeting at the tavern, they were plotting.

WILSON: Latimer weighing out powder to the Radicals. But your husband stopped them.

AMELIA: While I made bullets in the basement.

WILSON: Well this is news, you made bullets.

AMELIA: We did not go to church that day. It was cold, the stove was blazing high. I was rather abashed when Margaret -

WILSON: Bishop Cronyn's wife?

AMELIA: Came in and caught me at it. I feared a scolding but then Margaret produced a pair of bullet moulds which she had just borrowed. She said she was going home to employ herself in the same way.

WILSON: Those were heady times.

AMELIA: And a time when I felt that you were truly one of us.

WILSON: You said earlier I was your friend.

AMELIA: You would be an even closer one if it wasn't for your politics (pause, then states suspiciously) although you claim that you do not plan to return to political life.

WILSON: That defeat by Dixon in '51, twelve votes, brought me much sadness.

AMELIA: I do recall it had something to do with an indiscretion of speech.

WILSON: (loudly, as if he's addressing a large audience) I said in the House that Irishmen were not fit to carry firearms and the Irish forgot to forgive me.

AMELIA: Please, Mr Wilson. Remember, Kathryn is Irish (she gestures towards the kitchen).

WILSON: Is she the one who's been watering the wine?

AMELIA: Shhh.

WILSON: These Irish gentlewomen are not used to -

AMELIA: Mr Wilson! I spend enough of my day as it is settling disputes between the Irish and the Scottish servants. Do not add to my burden.

WILSON: Pardon me, Mrs Harris.

AMELIA: I appreciated the Cellini for my birthday, but the best gift you could give me would be to refrain from these Gaelic battles and return to the true British feeling.

WILSON: Amelia, I am a man of the people. I wish to remain your confidant, but you must realize that there are those who question the principles of the Ultra Tories. A house paid for with high taxes, overlooking

the Thames, invites envy and suspicion. I would rather be free to promote the interests of the London district as a whole, not just the elite.

AMELIA: But some are not appreciating your methods.

WILSON: The Governor?

AMELIA: Your Toryism is hardly of the deep dyed kind.

WILSON: I have my own thoughts.

AMELIA: That may not be prudent.

WILSON: The Rebellion Losses bill provoked havoc. The Montreal Tories pelted Lord Elgin with rotten eggs when he came to assent to it. And it is not just the Americans who can burn -

AMELIA: Please do not remind me.

WILSON: They torched the Parliament Buildings. And the Conservative leaders gloated openly

AMELIA: They did not gloat!

WILSON: They tried to excuse the most fiendish acts. No member of Parliament, no matter what party, is above the law. I could not allow my name to be associated with such barbarity.

AMELIA: It was an isolated incident.

WILSON: Was the burning of your home an isolated incident?

AMELIA: That is not a fair question.

WILSON: But it is fair. (pause) I had to resign.

AMELIA: And go to Reform. (she turns her back to him and crosses her arms with disgust)

(They are standing near each other at this point. Wilson isn't paying attention to the width of Amelia's crinoline. He starts to move forward, looking straight ahead and speaking)

WILSON: My path was illuminated by the blaze that consumed the Parliament Buildings, and I went forward, rejoicing in a release from bondage. (just as he says "bondage", he bumps into Amelia's crinoline) Oh, excuse me (he backs off looking at the crinoline with annoyance).

AMELIA: Too great did you rejoice. You even hid that evil John Talbot in your home during the Election Riots.

WILSON: As Returning Officer, I had to remain neutral.

AMELIA: Hiding a Reformer is not neutral.

WILSON: The Orange and Tory mob were going to kill him. I saw them strike Talbot through the open space where the votes were being taken.

AMELIA: You could have looked the other way.

WILSON: He fled to his brother's house on York Street, where your Tory ruffians, mad on whisky, followed him and fired two shots. He jumped through the window, into the garden -

AMELIA: And right up the steps of your home in Westminster. Why did you lead him to safety?

WILSON: Mrs Harris, are you suggesting that I should have allowed this man to die?

AMELIA: You did not have to take action yourself.

WILSON: Many magistrates were there. They witnessed the preparations for riot and murder, but they themselves were on the same side. They never once interfered to preserve the peace.

AMELIA: If it wasn't for your politics, Mr Wilson, I would -

WILSON: You would?

AMELIA: In every other way, you are the kindest, sweetest man. A Queens Counsel, a true gentleman, generous to a fault.

WILSON: To a fault?

AMELIA: I hear of the many thousands you have given to your friends in need.

WILSON: It is difficult for me to refuse a solicitation.

AMELIA: Even when you suspect that you will likely have to meet the paper. (as she says "paper" she flounces off, and deliberately brushes Wilson gently with her crinoline. She says haughtily) Pardon me.

WILSON: You talk about my generosity, what about your overly generous crinoline, which almost felled me? (he's building it up)

AMELIA: (pretending righteous indignation) Mr Wilson, this is no subject -

WILSON: Brings to mind an English court case, in the paper last week.

AMELIA: A Very Serious Case of Crinoline. Hmmm! I read the title and went no further.

WILSON: (Pretending indignation. Knows this will get a rise out of her) Ah, but you should have. Poor Rev Magnire, a fine and upstanding minister, was accused of improper conduct towards a lady in a railway carriage. Rev Magnire was simply trying to enter a cabin and the lady's crinoline was so large that he had no other place to set his feet than under that annoying structure. The lady filed a ridiculous charge which was dismissed by the judge as one of the most frivolous ones he had ever heard.

AMELIA: Never have I heard such a complaint.

WILSON: (Spoken tongue in cheek) We men have suffered in silence for too long. Crinolines are a nuisance. Many accidents have arisen because of their use; a man's length of limb which nature has furnished him, his only defence.

AMELIA: (still righteous indignation, setting him up) But many fashionable women -

WILSON: A fashion which should be banned. It appears daily to increase in absurdity. Accidents have failed to exert any influence; in fact it gains its votaries, from intellectual ladies to illiterate scullery maids. It is to be tolerated no longer, that through its vile and indecent agency, the reputations of ethical men are to be brought into question.

AMELIA: What do men want?

WILSON: A more modest and suitable attire.

AMELIA: (long pause) Well, I will certainly think twice about bringing up the subject of generosity with you again.

WILSON: (Laughs)

AMELIA: (Smiles)

(They both realize it was all a joke.)

AMELIA: Perhaps we should move on to a new topic. (thinks for a moment) I have entertained you with stories of my early life, but I know little of yours, other than that you were raised in Scotland (trying not to laugh) with the brownies.

WILSON: Came to Upper Canada with my parents in '23. We settled in Perth. I was the oldest in the family. We lived on a farm and all had to work hard. We cleared the land, felled large trees -

AMELIA: Just as my family did in Port Ryerse.

WILSON: I remember our first crop of potatoes. I had to carry it 20 miles to the nearest market and barefooted. The road was part morass, part swamp, part stone.

AMELIA: No wonder you have such a sympathy for the farmer.

WILSON: I enjoyed school. Four-eyes Stewart. He gave me a good education. After he moved to Stratford, I took over.

AMELIA: You taught school?

Wilson. For three years. I had to give up the farm because I developed a disease of the chest. I taught the children of the Honourable William Morris. I started writing some verses and they found their way into the home of Honourable Malcolm Cameron. Cameron thought they were so good that I should be a lawyer. After considerable preparation and industry, I presented myself to the benchers of the law society and was admitted as a student in Easter Term 1830. It was a difficult struggle to pay the fees incident to my calling. I employed myself in keeping the books of a shopkeeper. I was so poor that, when I could not afford a candle, I would lie down before the fire and pen my entries by the light of the burning logs.

AMELIA: You showed such ambition, even in the early days.

WILSON: When Elizabeth and I were married, we were both lacking in means.

AMELIA: And now you have Elmhurst House, one of the finest estates in Westminster. The staircase, mantels, shutters--all made of black walnut?

WILSON: Aye!

AMELIA: I have a memento from my visit to your estate last summer--a small amount of the beautiful honey in the box you gave me. I treasure it and tell the maids to use it sparingly. You have been most

successful with your bees. Your energy for the outdoors amazes me. I would leave it to servants.

WILSON: That is the difference between you and me. You want gardens to impress your neighbours, whereas I cultivate them for my own sake.

AMELIA: Comfort in the simple things. I guess I have forgotten. It got lost along the way.

WILSON: I do not intend to forget.

AMELIA: Your marriage is clearly in ruins, yet you have not despaired. You have gone forward and found happiness in other things. Congratulations are in order.

WILSON: Thank you.

AMELIA: In spite of your politics, and the ghost that lingers near you.

WILSON: You should be suspicious of your ghostly sightings.

AMELIA: Perhaps last night has contributed to my (she pauses)

WILSON: Yes?

AMELIA: Last night I enjoyed an ethereal pleasure. I got up several times and looked out the window. There was an aurora of unusual beauty which continued through til dawn. Everything was illuminated like a bright moonlight, changing colour from bright red to milk-white. It radiated from the centre of the heavens. I could see the snow glistening on the plants in the garden, and moved about with ease in my room without a candle, although there was no moon.

WILSON: We have our answer. It is the aurora borealis which has brought these visions upon you.

AMELIA: This is not a vision. It is real. Just as I saw the aurora last night, there are things that cannot be explained.

WILSON: Do not dwell too much on other worldly things.

AMELIA: (does not respond)

WILSON: I want you to celebrate your birthday and enjoy life. Look back on your past accomplishments with pride. You are an intelligent woman who is interested in everything from Cellini to maps to making bullets. And you like to have a good scrap every once in a while.

AMELIA: A clash with you is always enjoyable.

WILSON: But I have one request.

AMELIA: What is that?

WILSON: Stop trying to make me like your husband.

AMELIA: That is absurd.

WILSON: It is not. You expect me to have the same views as John.

AMELIA: (thinks for a minute) This may be true.

WILSON: I am not going to be like him, just because you desire me to be so. Will you cease trying to change me?

AMELIA: Perhaps.

WILSON: (forcefully) I am who I am (with his finger moves Amelia's chin around so she is looking into his eyes) I am proud of my independence. Will you accept me that way?

AMELIA: (smiles into his eyes, and then moves away from him) All right; I will try to do so.

WILSON: Wonderful.

AMELIA: But we can still argue like before?

WILSON: Most definitely.

AMELIA: (lightening up considerably) I guess, if you were to agree with me, then we would not have anything to spat about.

WILSON: And wouldn't that be dull.

AMELIA: Well, then it's settled (touches Wilson). We will continue to quarrel like before, but I will give up believing I can change you.

WILSON: Sounds like a great plan. (pause, checks his timepiece) And now I must depart. Thank you so much for the refreshments. (Mr Wilson leans over and kisses Amelia's hand) Amelia at the Forks -

AMELIA: Of Ayzhkanzeebee.

WILSON: Good day. (He makes his way to the door, leaving Amelia on the "stage")

AMELIA: Good day, Mr Wilson. And Mr Wilson?

WILSON: Yes?

AMELIA: Please make sure your ghost departs with you.

WILSON: (smiles and as he walks out the door sideways, puts his hand forward ahead of him as if pushing the ghost out with him)

AMELIA: (walks over to the fireplace, picks up the copy of Cellini, holds it against her, and exits centre) Benvenuto Cellini.

End of Play

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF THE BONEYARD MAN

Season Four, Episode 65

"The Man Behind The Mask"

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LEPAGE CRANBROOK, the enraged man behind the mask
MARGERY ROAD, one of only a handful of people who know the truth
ARTHUR, a thug with a sense of humour
THUG, a thug without a name
LOUIE, doesn't know what you're talking about
O'DONNELL, an Irish cop
CHIEF FITZHENRY, an Irish cop
MISS GLORY, queen of group therapy
KEITH, angry
BOSS, employer
JACKSON, moody
LADY HUFFINGTON, world's oldest drunk
CHUCK POTTS, simple bully
RUTH, sympathetic schoolgirl
DR. SKUNKFACE, stinks like skunk butt
Various thugs, kids, cops, neurotics and theatre patrons
An assortment of voices from the Rogue's Gallery
BILL JOHNSON, the man behind the mic

(Signature theme.)

BONEYARD:

Who knows what inner turmoil and crisis of identity lurks beneath the grim farade of a leering, jeering skeletal mask? The Boneyard Man do, mu hu hu hu ha ha ha! But he doesn't care.

BILL JOHNSON:

Folks, once again Doctor Fine's Emotional Distress Tablets brings you another character-defining adventure of The Boneyard Man. LePage Cranbrook, wealthy slug-a-bed and amateur detective, is in reality, angry. He's also The Boneyard Man, that sinister spectre of decency who crashes headlong through the undergrowth of crime, machete in hand, hacking this way and that, clearing a path for justice. Only longtime friend and companion Margery Road--who's got quite a bit of dirt on more than a few high-profile socialites, let me tell you-knows of Cranbrook's alter-ego, The Boneyard Man. Tonight's episode: "The Man Behind The Mask."

(Music. SFX: night in the city.)

ARTHUR: Alright, Louie, where's the money?

LOUIE: What money?

ARTHUR: What money, he says.

(SFX: The boys snicker and jeer incredulously through this bit.)

ARTHUR: Listen to this joker. What money, he says. I ask him, "where's the money?" he says "What money?" The guy's a regular comedian. "What money?" That's rich like truffle. Hey, I got a joke for youse guys. Guy walks into a bar, grabs Jimmy, roughs him up a little and asks "Where's the money?" Jimmy looks him in the eye and says, "What money?"

(SFX: laughter from the BOYS.)

ARTHUR: Hey, hey, knock knock.

EVERYONE: Who's there?

ARTHUR: Where's the money.

EVERYONE: Where's the money who?

ARTHUR: What money?

(SFX: howls of laughter.)

ARTHUR: What money. You're a regular vaudeville act, you know that?

LOUIE: Honestly, I don't know what you're talking about-

(SFX: howls of laughter and derision.)

ARTHUR: (APING LOUIE) "Honestly, I don't know what you're talking about." Can you believe this character? You're a regular character, you know that, Louie? A real funny cartoony character. "Honestly, I don't know what you're talking about." Talk about a funny guy. I ain't never heard anything so funny. "Honestly, I don't know what you're talking about."

LOUIE: Seriously, I don't, what money?

(SFX: insane amounts of laughter.)

ARTHUR: "Seriously, I don't," all together now-

THE BOYS: What money!

(SFX: laughter continues. Everyone is in hysterics.)

ARTHUR: Can you believe this character? Louie, where's the money? "What money?" Where's the money I says. "What money," he says. Too much.

LOUIE: Excuse me please, I'm late for an appointment-

(SFX: explosion of hysterics.)

ARTHUR:

"Excuse me please, I'm late for an appointment!" "I'm late for an appointment." (IN DIFFERENT SILLY VOICES) I'm late for an appointment! I'm late for an appointment, I'm late for an appointment-

(SFX: THE BOYS start singing, "I'm late for an appointment.")

ARTHUR: Where's the money? I'm late for an appointment!

LOUIE: Will you people just leave me alone?

(SFX: laughter, mocking, all THE BOYS mocking him and repeating the phrase, "Will you people just leave me alone?")

LOUIE: Well, I've had enough of this, I'm leaving. Excuse me.

(SFX: all mirth suddenly vanishes.)

ARTHUR: Ah, ah, ah...and just where do you think you're going, Louie? Lookee what I got here...

(SFX: the snikt of a switchblade.)

ARTHUR: You know what this is?

LOUIE: I'm sure I don't.

ARTHUR: This is a knife.

LOUIE: (ALARMED) Gasp! I've heard about those!

ARTHUR: Then I guess you know what'll happen to you if you don't cough up the dough.

LOUIE: I haven't eaten any dough. Except the toast I had this morning for breakfast, and that's well beyond the point of being coughed up, ha ha.

(A brief silence.)

ARTHUR: Where's the money, Louie?

LOUIE: What money!

(SFX: ridiculous amounts of laughter. We hear the BONEYARD laugh over top of it. The laughter suddenly stops, but BONEYARD goes on a little long.)

BONEYARD: I thought there was something funny going on here.

ARTHUR: Who the hell are you?

BONEYARD: I'm-oh for god's sake I've been haunting these streets for years now, I've foiled your schemes, bonked your heads together countless times and mopped the pavement with your ugly mugs so clean you could eat off it. I should be legendary at this point.

ARTHUR: I didn't ask for your life story, I said who the hell are you.
BONEYARD: Sigh. I'm-The Boneyard Man. Mu hu hu hu hu, hu, ahem.
ARTHUR: Yeah, well, you better get out of here, or I'll cut ya. Now beat it. Scram!
BONEYARD: Okay. Mind if I give you a little something to remember me by?
ARTHUR: What, you got a calling card?
BONEYARD: Um, sort of...

(SFX: a hit and ARTHUR falls.)

THUG: Hey! That guy just dropped Arthur! Let's all get him!
EVERYBODY: Yeah, let's get him, etc.

(SFX: a fisticuffs. The BONEYARD MAN laughs.)

BONEYARD: Silly thugs. I'm in such a bad mood!
LOUIE: Thanks, mysterious stranger. You saved me from a terrible beating.
BONEYARD: What's my name, punk!
LOUIE: Uh, uh, uh-
BONEYARD: Say it!
LOUIE: Uh, Bone Man! Bone, the, the, Bone, Man...
BONEYARD: Boneyard Man.
LOUIE: Boneyard Man. Sorry, Boneyard Man. Boneyard Man.
BONEYARD: Now get outta here. Keep your nose clean!
LOUIE: I will!

(SFX: LOUIE runs away. Sparse, Philip Glass type piano music. SFX: city noises. In the distance a siren, traffic.)

LEPAGE: (BONEYARD) The city throbs and pulses, teeming with parasites and the occasional symbiote. I lurk through the alleys and tunnels, a dark shadow silently sweeping across the walls, ready to strike. I am The Boneyard Man, a soldier of justice deep behind enemy lines. It is a lonely pursuit. The mask I wear, this death's head, is a grim reminder of what fruits evil will inevitably reap. Those malevolent cellar dwellers whose path I cross fear me. They fear me or they get a good pounding. But it's not all fun and games, though. Sometimes I get shot. Quite often, actually. Way more than average. And that never gets any less painful, either. Freaking criminals. Why do they always have to have guns? I guess they don't want to get pounded. By me. The Boneyard Man. Would they be so quick to shoot if they knew the man behind the mask? Wealthy playboy philanthropist LePage Cranbrook? A man of inexhaustible smiles and chuckles with a quick wit and a heart of gold? Yeah, they'd probably still shoot me. Freaking criminals.

O'DONNEL: Hey, look, Chief! Up there, it's the Bone Man!

(Music ends.)

FITZHENRY: Alright, Boneyard Man, come on down off that second storey ledge. What, are you a peeping tom now as well as a public menace?

BONEYARD: Chief Fitzhenry. I was just...contemplating.

FITZHENRY: Constipated?

BONEYARD: Contemplating.

FITZHENRY: Well, get the hell down.

BONEYARD: What are all you cops doing in this quiet alley?

FITZHENRY: Quiet down! We're just about to raid this little apartment. We got a warrant for Sammy Supino's arrest. You wanna help? We're probably going to have to pound him!

BONEYARD: You'll never fit all these cops in that little basement apartment.

FITZHENRY: Sure we can. Room for one more, even...

BONEYARD: You go ahead. I'll watch.

FITZHENRY: Well, suit yourself. And get the hell down offa there! Alright boys, on the count of three. One, two...three!

(SFX: a door broken in, a hundred cops trashing an apartment, yelling, beating people up, etc.)

BONEYARD: Despite the fact that I have been of no small assistance to the police on countless occasions

as both LePage Cranbrook and The Boneyard Man, I still don't get a lick of respect from police Chief Fitzhenry. God, I don't want to end up like him. This town has beaten him to a pulp. He's the meanest, most disillusioned, crankiest man this side of Dublin. He'd just as soon break your hand as shake it. Still, there's something about him, something solid. A lesser man would have been swallowed alive by this city. And here he is, still Chief of Police almost fifteen years later.

(SFX: the noise has settled down. Mumbling, movement, laughter.)

FITZHENRY: Ha, ha, okay boys, take him downtown and book him. Whooo! I'll tell ya, Bonehead, you missed a good one there. That was one serious fisticuffs. Whatsa matter, I thought you lived for violence! Are you sick? Oh, I forgot, you're constipated.

BONEYARD: Goodnight, Chief.

FITZHENRY: Goodnight. And get the hell offa there!

(SFX: car doors slamming, sirens receding into the night. Philip Glass music.)

LEPAGE: The chief was right. I guess I do appreciate the violence. I always thought the violence was a consequence of the pursuit of justice. But I do have this little...anger thing. Just a little thing. With anger. I'm working on it. I'm in group therapy now. I hate it though. I just want to pound them all.

MISS GLORY: Ah, LePage, so good you could join us.

(Music ends.)

MISS GLORY: We were afraid you might not show up this evening.

LEPAGE: Well you can relax, I'm here.

MISS GLORY: Yes. We saved you a seat.

LEPAGE: Oh, that was kind of you. Seeing as how they're all busting down the door to get in here.

MISS GLORY: Ah, ha, yes. LePage, we've got someone new with us this evening, and the rest of us have made our introductions. Perhaps you'd like to introduce yourself?

LEPAGE: LePage. Cranbrook. Angry.

KEITH: Hey, I'm Keet. Hey, ain't you dat millionaire guy with da house?

LEPAGE: Yeah, that's me.

KEITH: Wow, hey, I never tot youse guys wid dem houses gets angry or nuttin'.

LEPAGE: Well. Sometimes.

KEITH: Hey, guy, know what I do when I gets angry?

LEPAGE: I don't know. Do you kill people?

KEITH: No, no, ha ha, I wish. No. No, hey, know what I do?

LEPAGE: Hey, no, I don't.

KEITH: Put my fist troo da wall. Pow! Broke my hand four times already.

LEPAGE: And you'd like to put an end to that behavior.

KEITH: Naw, it ain't behaviour, it's just summpin' I do. Hey, guy, how come you gets angry when you got dem houses and expensive fish and stuff?

LEPAGE: I'm angered mostly by criminal intent.

KEITH: Huh?

LEPAGE: People who seek to unjustly impose themselves upon others, or in some way infringe upon another's human rights or property.

KEITH: Huh. Know what makes me angry?

LEPAGE: Heartburn?

KEITH: Naw, dem horses. I try to pick da right one, but dey never pay off for me. Dam dem horses!

LEPAGE: How many therapy groups are you in?

MISS GLORY: LePage, before you arrived, we were discussing possible ways to channel our aggressive instincts to affect positive change within the context of our various emotional scenarios. I was just about to do some role playing. Perhaps you'd care to be first, since you're used to being in the spotlight?

LEPAGE: Yes, by all means, use me.

MISS GLORY: Okay. Let's pretend that you're investigating a crime, as you are sometimes wont to do. Let's say that I'm a wrongdoer. I've just robbed someone's house, and you are confronting me. Okay?

LEPAGE: I am your tool.
MISS GLORY: Okay, now I've just come out of the window, and ope! There's you.
LEPAGE: Surprise.
MISS GLORY: LePage Cranbrook! I suppose you're going to try and stop me.
LEPAGE: As I am sometimes wont to do.
MISS GLORY: Well, forget it. I'm taking this loot and I'm going home.
LEPAGE: Think harder, Miss Glory. If you take one step in any direction, I'm going to pound you. MISS
GLORY: Now, now, LePage. You wouldn't hit a woman, would you?
LEPAGE: Sure. Why not.
MISS GLORY: That's just wrong.
LEPAGE: So is stealing.
MISS GLORY: Yes, but shouldn't the punishment fit the crime?
LEPAGE: What, I should steal from you?
MISS GLORY: No...I suppose it would be up to a judge to decide what punishment I am due.
LEPAGE: Well, in order for that to happen, you must first be detained.
MISS GLORY: But I don't want to go to jail.
LEPAGE: Well, you can come along quietly, or I could just pound you...
MISS GLORY: Are you making a citizen's arrest?
LEPAGE: Um...yes, I suppose so.
MISS GLORY: Well, I guess the jig is up. Confound you, LePage! Foiled again.
(SFX: MISS GLORY applauds. Several others join in.)
MISS GLORY: Well done, LePage! You found a peaceful resolution to your conflict without resorting to violence. Kudos. How do you feel?
LEPAGE: I feel like I'm paying you a little too much. No offense, or anything, but your scenario is about as realistic as a Jules Verne novel. Criminals in New York are simply not as compliant as they are where you come from, in outer space.
KEITH: It don't madda, you shouldn't hit a lady, LeMans.
LEPAGE: Hey, thanks, Keet.
KEITH: ...you getting snippy wit me, tough guy?
LEPAGE: Oh, I wouldn't do that, I understand you get angry.
KEITH: I only get angry 'cause of da horses!
LEPAGE: Not me, I love horses. Know how I got rich? Bettin' on da horses!
KEITH: Oh, dat's it, you're askin' for it!
LEPAGE: Bring it on, Angry Keet!
(SFX: a fisticuffs and protestations from Miss Glory. The Philip Glass music resumes.)
LEPAGE: Well, there you go. I'm batting a thousand. Four sessions, four fistfights. I can't say as it's really helping all that much...but at least it's better than the one on one therapy I had with that fragile psychiatrist who kept saying, "it's not my fault you're angry, LePage." Well, duh. At least in group I get to vent my frustration through fighting. Maybe therapy's not the answer. I just get so distracted... I lose focus on what I'm supposed to be doing. My mind starts to wander...my head is filled with clues and suspects, old case files, criminal modus operandi, telephone numbers, addresses, statistics, radio advertisements-
BILL JOHNSON: We'll return to the Boneyard Man's train of thought in just a moment. But first, a word about Doctor Fine's Emotional Distress Tablets.
BOSS: Jackson, could you please file these insurance claims for me?
JACKSON: Aw, get off my back, you slave driving fascist!
(JARRING CHORD.)
BOSS: ...pardon?
JACKSON: Do this, do that, do something else-I'm not your little pony you fat drooling walrus! Do it your damn self!
BOSS: Ummm...you're fired?

BILL JOHNSON: Sufferers, do you dread getting out of bed in the morning for fear that you'll have yet another one of your "moments"? Are your emotions getting the best of you in situations wherein you'd rather they didn't? Well, worry no further. Doctor Fine's Emotional Distress Tablets come in a variety of formulae to smooth over all your emotional rough spots. And they're colour coordinated for easy identification. Try a black tablet for those, "just put me out of my misery" mornings. A yellow tablet will make sure you're not so happy you could scream. A red tablet is just the thing for those moments when you could just kill someone. Pop a green pill just before you tell someone she's fat, and be sure to swallow a blue one before you sit down to watch "Old Yeller." Doctor Fine's tablets are easy to swallow, fast acting, and contain actual medicinal ingredients now. So the same tablets you swore by fifty years ago are now even better and more legitimate than ever. So remember, there simply is no better kind; it's Doctor Fine for Peace Of Mind. And now the conclusion of, "The Man Behind The Mask."

(Music.)

LEPAGE: Doctor Fine for peace of mind...what was I thinking...? Oh yeah. The anger thing. Aw, it's not so bad. I'd like to meet a two-fisted vigilante on these streets who isn't angry about something. And it's not like I ever killed anybody. They all end up killing themselves accidentally. If I had a dime for every time somebody from my rogue's gallery ended up killing themselves accidentally, I'd have about-well, let's see, there was Captain Meano and Dr. Triton who fell into the gears of their really gigantic shark-shaped submarine...

(SFX: TRITON and MEANO getting ground up and spat out.)

LEPAGE: Dr. Dripper who just sort of tripped into his lab equipment...

(SFX: DRIPPER frying.)

LEPAGE: Jumpy Joe Dynamite who fell off a tall building...

(SFX: DYNAMITE "Evil never dieeeeeeeeeeeeeesss-" Splat.)

LEPAGE: Saucy Simpson, the second class sailor-well, actually, no, he was eaten by a killer whale-

(SFX: a killer whale jumping out of the ocean, swallowing SIMPSON, and splashing back into the ocean.)

LEPAGE: Guess I can't count him-well, sure, what the hell. Oh, Doctor Diablo was eaten by his own mutated fruit, so that was his own damn fault...

(SFX: DIABLO being eaten to death by viscous, unseemly things.)

LEPAGE: Old Blind Dawson and Pete Possum, who both choked on their own tongues or something...

(SFX: POSSUM and DAWSON choking on their own tongues.)

LEPAGE: There was that guy, what's his name, got killed by a mummy-

(SFX: Diplomat being killed by a mummy.)

LEPAGE: Oh no, and all those cultists who were eaten by horrible drooling demons-

(SFX: cultists being eaten by slobbery monsters.)

LEPAGE: Holy crap. It just goes on and on! What am I, the kiss of death?

MARGERY: (LOUD WHISPER) LePage, why are you making those awful noises?

LEPAGE: Oh, sorry, I was lost in a reverie...

MARGERY: Well stop it, people are trying to hear the play!

LEPAGE: What's to hear? Nobody's saying anything! This play is stupid.

(SFX: a patron goes "Shhhhhh!")

MARGERY: They're using silence as dramatic tension.

LEPAGE: Dramatic boredom, more like.

(SFX: another "shhhh!")

MARGERY: People are staring, LePage, quiet down.

LEPAGE: Why are they staring. Don't look at me, watch the damn play!

(SFX: Many patrons going "Shhhhhhhh!")

MARGERY: Now, shhh!

(A silence.)

LEPAGE: Now what's he doing.

MARGERY: He's contemplating the bottle.

(SFX: a brief silence. LEPAGE begins to snore. Many patrons go "SHHHHHH!")

LEPAGE:

(PRETENDING TO WAKE SUDDENLY) Snort...wha-huh? What happened, is the theatre on fire?

(SFX: SHHHHHHHHHH!)

MARGERY: You are so dead, Cranbrook.

LEPAGE: Margery...do you think I'm the kiss of death?

MARGERY: You certainly know how to kill an evening.

LEPAGE: No, seriously-

MARGERY: Yes, seriously.

LEPAGE: No, seriously, consider the number of criminals who have accidentally or mysteriously died in my presence. Dozens of people.

(SFX: two people Shhhhhh!)

MARGERY: Sorry, sorry. (A LITTLE QUIETER) Dozens of people die every day.

LEPAGE: Yeah, but...how often does the average person see somebody die? Most people go their whole lives without seeing that.

MARGERY: That's because you're hogging all the action.

KEITH: Alright, dat's it. Me and da wife paid good money for dis show, and I'm not about to let some jackass-gasp! (ANGRY) It's you!

LEPAGE: Hey, Angry Keith from Group!

KEITH: Time for da second lap, hey bub?

LEPAGE: Well sure, if you feel like losing again...

KEITH: Dat's it! To da glue factory wid you!

LEPAGE: Bring it on!

(SFX: a fisticuffs, a theatre up in arms. Glass Music.)

LEPAGE: Margery's a great gal. Not only is she my longtime friend and companion, she's also good in a fight. God love 'er. I trust her like no one else on this earth. She's the only one who knows that I am The Boneyard Man. Well, her and my occasional butler Albert. And my biological father Donald Gander, but that's it. Just those three people and that guy at that drunken bush party, there's nobody else. There's a couple of FBI agents who basically know, but they can't prove it. No one else has ever had the slightest inkling that I, LePage Cranbrook, prowl the streets of New York as The Boneyard Man except those evil cultists, but they were all eaten by slobbery demons, so my secret's safe there. My mother probably knows, she knows everything. But that's it, surely. The rest of the world is oblivious to the fact that LePage Cranbrook and The Boneyard Man are one and the same. Except Tuft, The Smartest Dog In The World, he doesn't go by looks, he goes by smell, so he obviously knows. Hm. Maybe I should get a secret Boneyard Man cologne...

(SFX: a knock. Music ends.)

MARGERY: (BEHIND DOOR) LePage, are just about finished in there?

LEPAGE: Yes, just about, Margery!

MARGERY:(BEHIND DOOR) You've been in there for thirty minutes! What are you doing?

LEPAGE: I don't know, bathroom stuff! I'll be out in a minute!

MARGERY: (BEHIND DOOR) That's what you said fifteen minutes ago!

LEPAGE: I'll be out in a minute, are you in the middle of a race or something?

MARGERY:(BEHIND DOOR) Some of us have been drinking daiquiris all day, LePage!

LADY HUFFINGTON: (BEHIND DOOR) Yes, and some of us have ninety year old bladders!

LEPAGE: Lady Huffington, I'll be out in a minute.

LADY HUFFINGTON: (BEHIND DOOR) Ninety year old bladder.

(Glass music starts up again.)

LEPAGE: I guess the chief was right. I guess I am constipated. I'm just so pent up half the time. Sure, I'm jolly and festive in the public eye, but deep down inside I've got rage in my bowels. Thick, black rage that I can't seem to evacuate. Where does it all come from? I've always been this way, even as a child...

(Flashback music. SFX: children in a schoolyard.)

CHUCK: Hey, look fellas, it's LePage Cranbrook, the Gloomy Gus.

(CHUCK's entourage snickers and murmurs through this bit.)

CHUCK: Whatsamatter today, LePage? Is your tie too tight?

LEPAGE: Just leave me alone, Chuck.

CHUCK: Or what?

LEPAGE: Or you'll get me all mad.

CHUCK: Ha! You're always mad, stupid.

LEPAGE: Well maybe if you stopped calling me stupid I wouldn't always be mad.

CHUCK: You're probably right, stupid. Hey, you know what your new name is?

LEPAGE: I don't have a new name.

CHUCK: Yes, you do. It's LeMad.

LEPAGE: Sigh. Why not, "LeRage." At least it rhymes. It would be more fitting.

CHUCK: I think The Loser would be more fitting.

LEPAGE: "LeRage" is more fitting because rage is a synonym for mad, assuming you're using mad in a colloquial sense, equivocating it with anger rather than insanity.

CHUCK: Why don't you just talk like a normal person!

LEPAGE: I am speaking like a normal person, you Precambrian atavism!

CHUCK: Oh, that's it, I'm taking your shoes!

(SFX: a struggle, in which CHUCK is victorious.)

CHUCK: See you later, LeMad!

(SFX: the boys laughter recedes into the distance.)

LEPAGE: Curse you, Chuck Potts! Someday I'll teach you a lesson in manners. You and your ilk shall meet the spirit of vengeance!

RUTH: I saw what Chuck Potts did to you, LePage. I'm really sorry. He's a jerk.

LEPAGE: Shut up!

(Flashback music.)

LEPAGE: Damn you Chuck Potts! I still hate you.

(SFX: an insistent knock.)

MARGERY: (BEHIND DOOR) LePage!

LADY HUFFINGTON: (BEHIND DOOR) LePage!

LEPAGE: I said I'd be out in a minute!

MARGERY:(BEHIND DOOR) Shouldn't you be out tracking down Dr. Skunkface or something?

LEPAGE: Oh yeah...Dr. Skunkface.

(Music. SFX: Street noise, in the distance.)

LEPAGE: (BONEYARD) Dr. Skunkface, Dr. Skunkface. Once a brilliant scientist using his powers for good, now a twisted servant of evil. Too bad his experimentation with skunk hormones in an effort to make himself more attractive to women ended up making his head smell like a skunk butt. Why are so many of my nemeses doctors? Dr. Skunkface, Dr. Dripper, Dr. Diablo, Dr. Triton, Dr. Irony...no wonder I don't get a yearly check-up. Quacks. Aw, there he is now, sneaking into his not so secret lab. God, I can smell him from here. Well, let's make this quick.

(SFX: jangling keys.)

SKUNKFACE: Ohh, I can never remember which key opens the door to the secret lab...

BONEYARD: Doctor Skunkface.

SKUNKFACE: Gasp! The Boneyard Man!

BONEYARD: On the nose.

SKUNKFACE: What seems to be the trouble, Mr. Boneyard Man? I've done nothing wrong...

BONEYARD: Well, there is a little matter of your contaminating a bank and then robbing it when everybody fled.

SKUNKFACE: That wasn't me, that was...that was...Doctor Contaminant!

BONEYARD: You mean The Contaminator. He's not a doctor.

SKUNKFACE: Yes, yes, The Contaminator, I even saw him do it.

BONEYARD: That's quite a trick, he's doing ten years in prison right now. I put him there mys-god you stink! I'm gonna throw up!

SKUNKFACE: I guess the jig is up. You win, Boneyard Man. I'll come along quietly.

BONEYARD: ...no, no. You're supposed to fight me.

SKUNKFACE: Is that really necessary?

BONEYARD: Just-just fight me, okay?

SKUNKFACE: Oh, alright. Put up your dukes.

BONEYARD: That's the spirit.

(SFX: a really lame half-hearted fight, which they speak through:)

BONEYARD: Come on, you punch like a girl. Hit me! Hit me! Come on, hit me. That's it, there you go, that's the stuff, okay, now I'm gonna lay on the coup de gras, okay? Are you ready?

SKUNKFACE: I suppose.

(SFX: a solid hit and SKUNKFACE goes down. BONEYARD laughs.)

BONEYARD: What better therapy could anybody ask for, I mean really.

(Glass music.)

LEPAGE: The city has a million stories, and mine is...well, I guess I'm sort of the appendix. Just come to me if you want to know what's going on. I'm the guy in the skeleton mask...The Boneyard Man. The ever vigilant sentry standing watch over the gates of...uhhh...decency. Mm-hm. Sometimes I think enough is enough...the burden of a secret identity...getting shot, pretty sick of that...and my pathological aversion to blood is kind of problematic in this business, too...it all just makes me want to take off the mask for good and bury it deep in the earth.

SKUNKFACE: Can I get up now?

BONEYARD: No, you stay put until the police arrive.

SKUNKFACE: Aw, geez...

LEPAGE: But I'm still here. I'm always out here, watching, pounding people. I suppose I always will be. Until that one bullet finally hits its mark. Or until I'm old and wheezy and I've got hemorrhoids or something. Until then, we'll both be out here. The masked man...and the man in the trousers behind the mask.

(APPLAUSE. Signature theme.)

BILL JOHNSON: Ladies and gentlemen, you have been listening to The Continuing Adventures Of The Boneyard Man. Tonight's episode, "The Man Behind The Mask," was performed by Jeff Culbert, Rachel Holden-Jones, Jayson McDonald, Virginia Pratten and Jeff Werkmeister. Music by Dean Harrison, script by Jayson McDonald. Tune in next time for another revealing episode, and until then, keep your wild mood swings in check with Doctor Fine's Emotional Distress Tablets. I'm Bill Johnson, goodnight, this is The Natural Broadcasting Company.

(APPLAUSE.)

CHELSEA & BOGGS

Episode 3: "FUZZ BUSTER"

Written by Rod Keith

DET. LESTER BOGGS, lovable street-smart detective, Pacific City Metro Division
DET. APRIL CHELSEA, lovable book-smart detective, Boggs' partner
CAPT. WALLACE PRANKEY, their crusty but lovable superior
SWEETBOX, lovable informant pimp
DET. JACK STORNOWAY, lovable ex-partner of Boggs
DISTRICT ATTORNEY MANDIBLE, semi-lovable stakes-raiser
"LUCKY" LUMPFORD MAXWELL, mostly lovable snitch
LORETTA MAXWELL, quite lovable little sister of Lucky
LT. PLUMLEY, incredibly lovable cannon fodder guarding Lucky
LT. FRADELLA, pre-lovable partner of Plumley
SANDY BOTTOMS, oft-loved ex-girlfriend of Lucky
CHARLIE COLLINS, intra-lovable butcher shop owner
BIG RED, de-lovable punk
CATFISH, re-lovable sidekick
THUG 1, though not supported by the text, very much in love with Thug 2
THUG 2, still dealing with a bad breakup and not quite ready for a new relationship
RICO, loves only his mother
SCOOTER, loves only Rico's mother
DOCTOR, lovin' every minute of it...all right!
NURSE, has never known true love, but still believes it exists
LT. BACON, sends old high school sweeties cards every Christmas, never gets a reply
LT. FRY, a lover of life to its fullest
OFFICER, once dated the Nurse; oh, how the sparks flew
HIPPIE 1, free love farmer
HIPPIE 2, more in love with the idea of love, he was told by an ex-girlfriend
NINJAS, who knows what happens behind the curtains

Commercial #1

Commercial #2

Trailer

BOGGS -Rod

CHELSEA- Niki

PRANKEY- John

JENNY, GINGER, HOODED SATANIST- Danika

BEAT COP 1, BRUNO -Holm

BEAT COP 2, LUCIFER MANDRAKE -Tyler

MAYOR, CAPT. McGONIGLE- Jeff ANNOUNCER, SWEETBOX- Matt

0.1 (Street. Outside The District Attorney's office. A Car on SL.)

FRADELLA: (offstage) C'mon. Not far now. Keep moving. C'mon, stay with us. Only thirty feet to go.

(Enter PLUMLEY and FRADELLA around a very nervous "LUCKY" MAXWELL, their guns

drawn, backs to him, squishing him in. They move slowly towards the car.)

FRADELLA: See, Lucky? Piece of cake. (They holster their pieces.)

PLUMLEY: You got the keys?

FRADELLA: You drove.

PLUMLEY: Oh yeah. (Fumbles in pocket) Whoops. (The keys fall. The three move back in unison as

PLUMLEY picks them up. They then continue to the car.)

LUCKY: I feel like a sitting duck out here.

FRADELLA: Relax. You'll be at the hotel in a flash.

LUCKY: I just don't feel so safe.

PLUMLEY: We'll be with you the entire time. You don't snore, do you?

FRADELLA: Last guy we guarded wheezed like a freight train. By the end of the first night I wanted to plug him myself. Check underneath.

(PLUMLEY bends down and looks at the underside of the car)

LUCKY: What are you lookin' for?

FRADELLA: Bombs. So why do they call you 'Lucky'?

PLUMLEY: All clear.

LUCKY: I dunno... I get lucky sometimes I guess... (looking around warily)

FRADELLA: With the ladies?

LUCKY: Horses, mostly.

FRADELLA: ...Perv.

PLUMLEY: Funny. Can't get the key in the lock.

(NINJA appears with crosshair hoop, tracking slowly, with building tension music)

LUCKY: I mean gamblin'. Usually long shots pay off for me.

FRADELLA: Is that so? Prove it. (pulls out coin)

LUCKY: C'mon, can we just get goin'?

PLUMLEY: There's something jammed in there...

(NINJA slowly tracks over to get LUCKY's bum dead center in the crosshairs)

FRADELLA: Let's see how lucky you are. Call it.

LUCKY: Tails.

PLUMLEY: Someone stuck gum in here! Damn kids...(digs at lock with key)

FRADELLA: Good guess. Best two out of three?

LUCKY: Heads.

(FRADELLA flips the coin. It drops to the ground and rolls)

FRADELLA: Aw, crap.

(Crosshairs move up to LUCKY's head)

LUCKY: It went under the car. I'll get it.

(LUCKY bends down as a "pewp" silencer sound fires, hitting FRADELLA behind LUCKY.

FRADELLA falls as LUCKY rises)

LUCKY: It must've rolled to the other side...

PLUMLEY: Got it. (stands up) Hey, what happened?

LUCKY: Huh?

(NINJA focuses cross-hairs on LUCKY again)

PLUMLEY: What did you do? Move back!

(PLUMLEY crosses in front of LUCKY, Another "pewp" is heard. PLUMLEY drops.)

LUCKY: Uh-oh.

(LUCKY runs willy-nilly across the stage, as the NINJA tries to follow with the crosshairs. More bullets fly. Finally LUCKY crosses behind NINJA, and NINJA is shot. LUCKY surveys the carnage, then makes to exit. He returns quickly to grab the quarter off the ground, then high-tails it offstage. Tension build to sting. Blackout)

0.3 (Chelsea & Boggs Theme: "You're Goin' Down", with credits)

If you're runnin' around the wrong side of the law
You're goin' down, you're goin' down
Knock off a liquor store and steal a car
You're goin' down, you're goin' down

A two-time loser breaking his parole
Or a kitten drinking milk from someone else's bowl
If you're doin' something you're not supposed to do
Then the Angel and the Man are comin' after you

You're goin' down, you're goin' down
You're goin' down, you're goin' down

(here comes the slow part)

Sometimes the street's a hard place to be (yes it is)
There ain't no place for your soul to fly free (no no no)
You walk a tightrope from the day you're born
Watchin' your back from dusk 'til dawn
Little babies eatin' dinner from a garbage can
But you better not mess with the Angel and the Man

You're goin' down, you're goin' down
You're goin' dow-wown... you're go-wo-wo-in' downnnnn....

(Timed with the music, NINJAS comes out with "Chelsea & Boggs" title cards; flip over for 'Boggs' credit as BOGGS appears, then 'Chelsea' credit appears as CHELSEA enters. They groove their way over to one side as PRANKEY carries on his card and SWEETBOX carries on his, cross and exit. CHELSEA and BOGGS meet BIG RED and CATFISH, who carry on their own credit sign, which is taken off by a NINJA who also carries a credit. JACK carries his credit across. Meanwhile, in a stylized manner, BOGGS offers bills to CATFISH, who after looking around, produces a mysterious box. BOGGS looks in, then nods to CHELSEA who shows her badge. RED pulls a knife which CHELSEA kicks from his hand, then karate chops him. CATFISH takes a swing at BOGGS, who ducks and gives him an uppercut to the jaw. CATFISH and BIG RED fall together and slump to the ground CS, as CHELSEA and BOGGS each put a foot on a thug, and come together back to back for the standard framed shot. Blackout.)

1.1 (Precinct. {SWEETBOX ambles across the stage with the episode card "Fuzz Buster".} BOGGS enters SL, CATFISH and RED held by the scruff of their necks.)

CATFISH: Everybody's doin' it, man!

BOGGS: You got a right to remain silent, creep. Use it.

CATFISH: Supply and demand! We're fulfillin' a need.

BOGGS: You guys sicken me. I see little kids smaller than my shoe hooked on this stuff.

(A uniformed OFFICER walks on SL towards SR)

BOGGS: Take these guys down to Carter and book 'em for trafficking.

OFFICER: (slightly bewildered) Uh... okay. (Takes RED and CATFISH off SL as CHELSEA enters SR with package)

BOGGS: Two pounds of Mexican Red. They're going away for a long time.

CHELSEA: (examining box) It's really quite remarkable that people can become so dependent on this.

BOGGS: Just thinking about how the human mind works blows my mind.

CHELSEA: And more coming over our border every day.

BOGGS: That's where slime merchants like those bozos come in. What I wanna know is, what's wrong with a good ol' American rock for a pet? (pulls rock out of box)

CHELSEA: Familiarity breeds contempt. People take what's around them for granted and crave the exotic.

BOGGS: (Dumps it back in) You gonna do the paperwork?

CHELSEA: Well, considering I've done the last sixteen daily reports...

BOGGS: So you're used to it. 'Write' on, college girl.

CHELSEA: But-

BOGGS: I'm gonna boogie down to the canteen and suss out which lucky vending machine gets to eat my two bits.

(CHELSEA sits down in a huff as BOGGS moves to exit. JACK enters. BOGGS halts. They stare at each other.)

BOGGS: You...!

JACK: You...!

(They yell, run at each other, and start grappling. BOGGS gets JACK in a full nelson, which he breaks out of, then JACK flips around and puts BOGGS in a headlock)

CHELSEA: Boggs? BOGGS!

JACK: Lemme hear "Uncle"! Say "Uncle"!

BOGGS: Not -- on-- your-- life!

CHELSEA: (pulling gun and pointing it at JACK) Release him! NOW!

(JACK sees her for the first time, stops)

BOGGS: Cripes! What are you doing? Put that away!

(PRANKEY enters)

PRANKEY: What in Sam Hill is all this dad-blasted commotion-(sees JACK) I don't believe it!

JACK: Captain Prankey.

(PRANKEY shakes his hand vigorously, after handing CHELSEA his coffee cup)

PRANKEY: I don't believe it! I really don't believe it! What's it been, five, six years?

JACK: Putting on a few pounds, I see there.

PRANKEY: Ah, well, you know, the desk--

JACK: You too, Boggo.

CHELSEA: "Boggo"?

BOGGS: Hey, save the flattery for the babes, hey-hey? (feints a few punches)

JACK: Heyyyyy...

BOGGS, JACK, PRANKEY: Heyyyyyyy!

(The three men stand there, beaming at each other. A beat.)

CHELSEA: Will someone please tell me what's going on?!

(The three turn to look at her)

BOGGS: Hm? Oh, Jack, Det. April Chelsea. And this-- this is Jack Stornoway.

JACK: Pleased to meet you. (shakes her hand warmly)

CHELSEA: And you are...?

PRANKEY: Only one of the finest officers Metro ever had! How many busts did you make in your first year? How many?

JACK: I really don't remember.

PRANKEY: Two hundred and eight! I had your rap sheets bound into a leather volume. I keep it beside my bed on top of the Bible!

BOGGS: Man, you were poetry on mag wheels! The best partner I ever had!

CHELSEA: Ahem...

BOGGS: (not hearing her) Yeah, the best partner I ever had!

PRANKEY: So what brings you all the way from Center City?

BOGGS: Thinking of coming back to old Metro?

PRANKEY: We can make space for you. Go tell Carl to clean out his desk!

JACK: Now, now. I'm just looking for a hand, if you can swing the time.

PRANKEY: Time? We got all the time in the world for Stormin' Jack Stornoway!

CHELSEA: But, Captain, we really have to go over this smuggling ring case-- (holds up file)

PRANKEY: Not now, Detective Kelsie--

CHELSEA: Chelsea.

PRANKEY: Can't you see Jack's here?

JACK: I don't want to interrupt anything on the hot plate--

PRANKEY: Nonsense.

JACK: No really.

CHELSEA: It is kind of important we--

PRANKEY: (ignoring her, continuing talking to JACK) I don't want to hear it. You get into my office right now and tell us what you need before I break you in two!

BOGGS: Just like old times, huh, Jack?

JACK: I've missed you too, Captain.

(PRANKEY laughs as the three walk, arms around each other, into PRANKEY's office, leaving CHELSEA standing there, holding her file.)

1.2 (PRANKEY's office. JACK, with BOGGS and PRANKEY listening intently to him, while CHELSEA is farther away, arms folded, listening warily.)

JACK: (notices coffee cups on PRANKEY's desk) Still on the bean, I see.

PRANKEY: Can't shake that monkey.

BOGGS: So what's up, Jack?

(Both BOGGS and JACK go to put their feet up on PRANKEY's chair at the same time. They chuckle, and BOGGS politely relinquishes his spot. For the next couple of lines he looks for another spot, then gives up after CHELSEA rolls her eyes at him.)

JACK: I understand Vic Manetti has finally been brought to trial.

PRANKEY: That's right. The D.A. finally built a case against him. Charged him with racketeering, peddling, possession of stolen goods, two counts of murder, two counts of conspiracy to commit murder, two counts of conspiracy to cover up the original conspiracy and fourteen counts of bragging about it.

BOGGS: You were a real stone in Manetti's shoe back when you were here in Metro. We knocked his operations upside the head a few times, remember?

JACK: Never could pin the man himself though. Lately I've been tailing this Center City hitman. Calls himself "The Fox". Yesterday I got a tip he was here in Pacific, hired by Vic Manetti to kill the prosecution's main witness. I figured this would be my best chance to nab The Fox. Catch him as he tries to make the hit.

PRANKEY: Your man may have already taken his shot. Literally. A sniper fired on the witness outside the D.A.'s office a couple hours ago.

JACK: Damn!

PRANKEY: Fortunately, he wasn't hit!

JACK: Oh, good!

PRANKEY: Unfortunately, the two cops assigned to protect him were.

JACK: Oh, damn.

PRANKEY: Fortunately, the informant got away.

JACK: Oh good!

PRANKEY: No wait, that's an 'unfortunately'. Sorry.

CHELSEA: He won't come back into custody?

PRANKEY: (pulls out file with photo) Lucky Maxwell was a mid-level goon in Manetti's organization. When he was caught for failing to stop for a red, the D.A. offered him the chance to testify with everything

he knew about his boss in exchange for a reduced sentence.

CHELSEA: Going through a light doesn't seem very serious.

PRANKEY: It is when you hit the D.A.'s Porsche.

BOGGS: So he'd rather rabbit than pigeon... the little weasel.

PRANKEY: His testimony is absolutely crucial. Without him, there's no case.

BOGGS: And Manetti walks.

PRANKEY: The trial's in only two days.

JACK: We have to find Lucky before it's too late

BOGGS: (Completing triumvirate looking outward) Then we can set a trap for The Fox-

JACK: --Using Lucky as bait-

PRANKEY: --Save the D.A.'s bacon--

BOGGS: And take the Fox down along with Manetti!

JACK: Yeah!

PRANKEY: Yeah!

BOGGS, PRANKEY, JACK: Yeahhh!

(They pose for a beat, looking smug and heroic)

CHELSEA: A-hem...

(The three men turn back to look at her)

CHELSEA: And how do you propose we do this?

BOGGS: Weelllll....no need to sweat the details. We just do it, y'know?

CHELSEA: I think there is some detail-sweating. What leads do we have? How do we know he hasn't left town? How do we find him? And how do we prevent this Fox from finding him first?

BOGGS: Sorry, Jack, she's a bit of an egghead.

PRANKEY: Detective, stop worrying. You'll have no problem finding Lucky. You're completely capable.

CHELSEA: ... I suppose.

PRANKEY: Because you'll have Jack around! (slaps JACK on the back) Nothing this boy can't do!

BOGGS: Alright, Jack, you can ride with me!

CHELSEA: There's not a lot of room in the Tarantula for three.

BOGGS: You don't have to come.

JACK: Look, Boggo... lately I'm used to working alone. Why don't you stick with Det. Chelsea, and I'll see what I can do on my end.

CHELSEA: Oh... are you too good to have a partner?

JACK: I haven't worked with a partner since my last one was killed.... by The Fox.

(An awkward silence)

CHELSEA: Well, there's an awkward silence.

BOGGS: I dig where you're coming from.... If I had a dime for all my partners that were killed, or maimed, blown up, or hacked up with a chainsaw-well, except you. (To CHELSEA) Oh, and you.

CHELSEA: The day's still young.

PRANKEY: Alright, people. No use lollygagging! Get out there and hit those streets! I want results! Results! RESULTS! ...And more coffee. (goes to pot and pours some)

CHELSEA: (holding file) What about the pet rock case?

PRANKEY: Oh... that. You're off it.

CHELSEA: I've been working on it for a week!

PRANKEY: So you're probably bored. (Takes it) I'll pass it on to Carl. (continues stirring coffee)

CHELSEA: But-

PRANKEY: But nothing! You've got more important things. I want you to help Jack get Lucky tonight.

(A beat as CHELSEA looks at him. He stares blankly back at her.)

PRANKEY: Carl! (storms off)

(BOGGS and JACK already outside PRANKEY's office, followed by CHELSEA)

BOGGS: Where you staying? Wanna hit the hay at my pad?

JACK: Depends. Living with anyone right now?

BOGGS: I'm uh, between babes.

JACK: Then no. I've seen your housekeeping abilities.

CHELSEA: Are you saying that a woman is only good for cleaning up?

BOGGS: (whispers to JACK, pointing at CHELSEA) Women's libber...

JACK: Sorry, I didn't mean for my comment to be misconstrued. It's just another human being wouldn't stand for his mess. Good luck you two. (Exits)

BOGGS: Man oh man! Can you believe it? Super Stormin' Jack Stornoway's in town!

CHELSEA: Yes... how very thrilling.

(CHELSEA exits quickly, followed by a slightly confused BOGGS)

1.3 (Street corner, couple of trash cans. SWEETBOX talking with CHELSEA and BOGGS at a card table with watches. CHELSEA is examining one watch in particular)

SWEETBOX: Guaranteed gen-you-ine Swiss, Angel, calibrated and tuned with total intricate precision to the nanosecond. That's real iron pyrite plating flaking off there too.

CHELSEA: The second hand's not moving.

SWEETBOX: Well, that's a special feature. For the urban customer. Say you're driving, and you're in a rush, you look at your watch and you see that hand goin' round and round, all of a sudden you're getting dizzy. Then you lose your equilibrium and next thing you know you're smashing into an oncoming 20-wheeler convoy. It's a lifesaving device. No extra charge.

CHELSEA: I can't say I'm really in the market for a timepiece, Sweetbox.

SWEETBOX: You know, it can go underwater? It's like a frog. Ambiguous.

BOGGS: We're looking more for the whereabouts of Lucky Maxwell.

SWEETBOX: Man, you guys.

BOGGS: What?

SWEETBOX: Always comin' by to ask me for something. Never just a friendly 'Hello, how's it hangin', Sweetbox? You keepin' well? Wanna go out for a muffin?' Naw, it's always where's this or who's that or who stabbed who. Well thank you very much. (starts sniffing)

CHELSEA: We had no idea you felt that way.

SWEETBOX: (looking away and crying a little) It just gets a dude down, dig?

CHELSEA: I'm so sorry...

(She puts her hand on his shoulder and he waves her away)

BOGGS: Here, c'mon, man, dry your eyes...

(CHELSEA pulls out a tissue and BOGGS pulls out a twenty. SWEETBOX grabs the twenty and wipes the tears away, then puts it in his pocket)

SWEETBOX: I forgive you. (straightens himself up)

BOGGS: Lucky Maxwell...

SWEETBOX: From Manetti's mob? Wouldn't want to be wearin' his shoes.

BOGGS: Where is he?

SWEETBOX: Don't know. (BOGGS grabs him by the lapels) But I know someone who does.

BOGGS: Who?

SWEETBOX: His ladyfriend. Well, I don't know if it was his ladyfriend, or whether they just casually dated, maybe they were just platonic and I'm readin' into it-

BOGGS: (shaking SWEETBOX) Who is she?

SWEETBOX: Well, who are any of us, really, philosophically speakin'-

(CHELSEA digs into her purse and hands him a \$10)

SWEETBOX: I think that clears up my existential angst.

CHELSEA: Now, what's her name and where can we find her? ...Please?

SWEETBOX: Well, Angel, since you asked so sweet, her handle's Sandy Bottoms. You can catch her at The Tender Trapeze. She's strippin' down there.

BOGGS: A stripper! Why didn't you say so! C'mon, let's roll!

CHELSEA: Well, hold on, Sweetbox might have some more-

(BOGGS already offstage starting the car)

CHELSEA: Thanks Sweetbox. (goes to go)

SWEETBOX: Hey, hold on! I feel neglected. (Spreads open arms as if to hug)

CHELSEA: (Comes back) Oh, well, usually Boggs takes care of this-

SWEETBOX: Well, he obviously don't care like you do.

CHELSEA: (Sighs) Oh, alright. (Punches him in the stomach and exits)

SWEETBOX: (collects himself) Takes a licking, and keeps on ticking... (picks up watch off the ground, looks at it, then shakes it to try to get it to work)

1.4 (The Tender Trapeze. CHELSEA questions SANDY. BOGGS sulks off to one side.)

SANDY: (offstage) Naw, I haven't seen the bum for almost two weeks. And I'd probably sock him in the mush if I did!

(SANDY walks on in coveralls, with scraper. She motions for BOGGS to get off chair as she starts stripping the paint off it)

CHELSEA: Why's that?

SANDY: Me and Lucky were supposed to be tight. Dated for a couple of months. Professed his undying love, yata yata, you know the spiel. Said he'd quit the mob, go straight. And me, I fell for it hook, line and stinker.

CHELSEA: What happened?

SANDY: Well, at the beach one evening, I see him walking along the shore with this other bimbo, looks like she's barely out of high school. I can't believe it. Nobody two-times me. I'd have torn them both apart except for Jerome.

CHELSEA: Who's Jerome?

SANDY: Oh, the guy I was with. Didn't want to spoil the mood. Anyway, next day Lucky calls me up. I'm so mad he don't get a word in wedgewise. Told him we're kaputski. Crawls by with a dozen roses and I throw 'em in his face, thorns first. Haven't laid eyes on 'im since.

CHELSEA: Any idea where else he might go?

SANDY: Lucky didn't have no friends outside the mob. Well, hold on... there was one guy, what's his name... some grade school buddy, has a butcher shop down in Devil's Toilet. Charlie Collins, I think. I don't know, I was usually pretty drunk.

CHELSEA: Thanks, Ms. Bottoms. You've been most revealing... right, Boggs?

BOGGS: (moping in corner) Not enough for me.

CHELSEA: If you do see Lucky, can you please give me a call? (hands her a card)

SANDY: Sure thing.

(CHELSEA & BOGGS exit.)

SANDY: Well, Time to get to work. (Wipes brow, then takes off overalls to reveal saucy outfit underneath, to stripper music as lights go down)

1.5 (Collin's Butcher Shop. CHARLIE on the phone)

CHARLIE: Hey, it's been over an hour now. I thought you were sending someone by. No, he ain't goin' anywhere, that's not the point. I can't have him sneezin' all over my ham hocks. Okay. See you soon.

(Hangs up. Opens the freezer door, LUCKY pops his head out)

LUCKY: I-I s-sure appreciate you h-hiding m-m-me out I-like this, Ch-Ch-Charlie.

CHARLIE: No problem, Lucky, what are friends for?

LUCKY: I d-don't know w-who else t-t-to turn t-to-

CHARLIE: Ahh...

LUCKY: D-do you m-mind if-ff I stay-out here f-ff-f-

CHARLIE: Now, Lucky, you know that wouldn't be smart. What if someone sees you? Best to cool your heels out of sight. Trust your pal.

LUCKY: B-B-b-b-b-b-

CHARLIE: No "b-b-b-b-b"! Cover yourself with the pimento loaf. It's fresh.

(Closes freezer door and locks it. Then goes to phone and dials)

(CHELSEA & BOGGS enter)

CHELSEA: Excuse me, is Charlie Collins around?

CHARLIE: That's me.

BOGGS: We're here about a friend of yours, Lucky Maxwell.

CHARLIE: Jeez, I thought you'd never get here. I'll grab 'im. (Goes to freezer door, then turns to see BOGGS' badge) Oh.

BOGGS: Something wrong?

CHARLIE: N-no.

BOGGS: What'd you mean, "I'll grab 'im".

CHARLIE: I mean- I'll grab him if I see him. You cops are lookin' for Lucky, right.

CHELSEA: That's not public knowledge.

CHARLIE: Oh! Uh... lucky guess.

BOGGS: What's behind the door, Choppy?

CHARLIE: That would be where the things to be kept frozen are... kept. Frozen.

(BOGGS looks at CHELSEA, then goes towards the door. CHARLIE tries to block his path)

CHARLIE: Hey, you can't just go in there, you need a warrant!

BOGGS: Search warrant this-

CHELSEA: (stopping BOGGS) He's right, Boggs! We do need a search warrant.

BOGGS: What?

CHELSEA: And I just happen to have one right here. (Pulls out paper from purse)

BOGGS: You do?

CHARLIE: Let me see that-

(CHARLIE walks past BOGGS, who grabs the key chain off CHARLIE's belt)

CHELSEA: Whoops, clumsy me... (drops it)

(CHARLIE bends down to get it as BOGGS opens the freezer)

CHARLIE: What gives... this is just a dry cleaning receipt- Heyyyy!

BOGGS: My my. (Pulls LUCKY out) On sale today for ten cents a pound. A snitch on ice!

CHELSEA: I guess we didn't need 'Sacred' Jack's help to stop Lucky cold after all.

BOGGS: Case closed. That was easier than Sweetbox's sister.

(Enter 2 THUGS)

THUG 1: Ay, you called about Lucky?

LUCKY: M-m-m-m-m- m-m---

BOGGS: What?

LUCKY: M-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-

CHELSEA: Yes?

LUCKY: ---Manetti's m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m....

BOGGS and CHELSEA: Yes?!

LUCKY: M-m-m-m--- men!

CHARLIE: No way I'm losin' my finder's fee!

(CHARLIE pulls out a big cleaver. The THUGS pull out guns. CHELSEA and BOGGS, with LUCKY between them, are surrounded. Big sting to commercial! Blackout.)

ANNOUNCER: "Chelsea & Boggs" will return... after this intermission.

Commercial 1- "Impulsion"

WOMAN- Danika

MAN- Jeff

VENDOR- Dan
ESCALATOR NINJAS-
ANNOUNCER- Rod

(VENDOR on SR at desk, with basket of flowers. MAN reads paper as WOMAN walks by. He lowers paper, turns to sniff her scent. WOMAN proceeds to escalator- a sheet held diagonally by NINJAS. She rides up it, as MAN grabs flowers, throws a \$20 at the bewildered VENDOR as he chases her up the escalator, then shoves the flowers at her. She turns and takes them with a smile. They reach the top of the escalator, and MAN thrusts a piece of gum, a Kleenex, a pen, a lobster, his right shoe, his shirt, then his underwear (which he tears right out of his pants) and proceeds to hand her each. Finally, they look at each other for a beat, he smiles at her and walks off. WOMAN is left with an armful of stuff.)

ANNOUNCER: "Impulsion" ... the new fragrance for women. It'll drive men... crazy!

(Blackout)

ANNOUNCER: We now return to... "Chelsea & Boggs"!

2.1 (Butcher shop. TWO THUGS and CHARLIE circle CHELSEA, BOGGS, LUCKY.)

THUG 1: Alright, pig, hand over the squealer and nobody gets bruised.

THUG 2: Except Lucky, huh huh.

CHELSEA: I'm afraid we can't do that.

LUCKY: Charlie, you're my oldest pal. How could you sell me out to Vic Manetti?

CHARLIE: Nothing personal, Lucky. I just hate your guts.

BOGGS: I'm giving you turkeys to the count of three to back off! One... two...

(Nobody moves)

BOGGS: Two... Two-and-a-half... we're coming up to three now... three comes after two.... Aw, screw it. You want Lucky, here he is!

(Fight music. BOGGS thrusts LUCKY forward, swings him by the arm, knocking the THUGS' guns from their hands, then back to knock them both over. CHARLIE comes at CHELSEA with the cleaver, backing her onto the counter, blade inches from her face. BOGGS exchanges punches with the THUGS, one on each side, alternating blows. LUCKY rises to see NINJA holding and pointing at sign through the curtain saying "BACK DOOR".)

He looks at the action, then exits)

CHELSEA: (still fending off CHARLIE) Boggs! Lucky's run out the back door!

BOGGS: Where?

(BOGGS leans back to take a look as the two THUGS, both intending to land blows on him, hit each other. NINJA hands turn sign around to say, "OVER HERE, STUPID")

BOGGS: What about you? You want any help?

CHARLIE: No thanks, I'm doin' okay.

BOGGS: I'm talking to her.

CHELSEA: I can handle myself just fine. Go!

BOGGS: You're sure.

CHELSEA: Positive.

BOGGS: Okay, Gloria Steinem.

(BOGGS runs out. CHARLIE and CHELSEA struggle, the blade an inch away from her face)

CHELSEA: Gloria Steinem indeed. I prefer the writings of Betty Friedan.

CHARLIE: Gimme a break! "The Feminine Mystique"'s characterization of a housewife's oppression in post-war industrial America fails to take into account women's own complicity in their collective lack of identity development!

CHELSEA: Perhaps, but the concept of self-reliance without defining one's womanhood in relations to the men around her still stands! Hah! (karate chops him)

(THUGS are now standing with guns pointed at her)

CHELSEA: Though perhaps a man could be of small use right about now... Boggs?
(The THUGS close in. Suddenly JACK appears, and shoots the guns out of their hands)
JACK: Hands over your thick-skulled heads, punks!
CHELSEA: Jack.
JACK: Sorry I'm late, Det. Chelsea.
CHELSEA: You just shot the guns out of their hands.
JACK: Yes.
CHELSEA: With one bullet.
JACK: Yes.
CHELSEA: And they weren't even facing you.
JACK: ...Yes.
CHELSEA: Well... who asked you! I could've managed on my own!
JACK: Just trying to help.
CHELSEA: What are you doing here anyway? (picks up lapel pin off the floor)
JACK: Dumb luck. While looking for The Fox, I heard Manetti's boys had located Lucky. Where is he, anyway?
2.2 (Cut to BOGGS running at the side as the butcher shop gets cleared. Lights up. Outside basketball court. Two teens, RICO and SCOOTER, playing. Enter BOGGS jogging.)
BOGGS: You seen a little guy about so high, (describes him), run by here?
SCOOTER: Yeah.
BOGGS: Which way?
RICO: Why should we tell you?
(BOGGS shows badge)
RICO: Well now I wanna tell you even less.
(Goes back to bouncing basketball and moves toward net. BOGGS grabs the ball.)
RICO: Hey!
BOGGS: It's a matter of life-and-death, boys.
SCOOTER: Hundred bucks.
BOGGS: A hundred bucks? It's not that life-and-death. Tell you what. I make five shots in a row, you spill. If not, I'll give you twenty, no questions asked. Deal?
RICO: You're on, Gramps!
(BOGGS dribbles the ball, as RICO and SCOOTER start catcalling. "Sweet Georgia Brown" starts playing. He sinks it. { NINJA with frame and NINJA dropping a second ball in thru the hoop each time } The second one, he turns around and throws it over his head. It goes in. The third one he throws in the complete opposite direction and it goes in. The fourth he's about to throw bending over between his legs as CHELSEA and JACK enter)
CHELSEA: Boggs!
(RICO and SCOOTER scatter)
CHELSEA: What are you doing? You're supposed to be after Lucky and instead you're goofing off in a playground!
BOGGS: I'm getting info... hey, where'd they go?
JACK: (shaking head) Man, you haven't changed a bit.
CHELSEA: He's probably long gone by now.
JACK: Smooth. Lucky gets lucky again. Well, we should still search the area.
(JACK exits, followed by CHELSEA, who looks back and shakes her head at him, then exits)
BOGGS: Aw, cripes!
(He drops the ball, and exits. It bounces, and NINJA adjusts the hoop so it goes in. Blackout)
2.3 (Precinct. PRANKEY with BOGGS, CHELSEA.)
PRANKEY: (pounding desk) Dad-blast it! No more screwups! I want Lucky found pronto!
BOGGS: It's just a matter of time, Captain. We've got the scent.

PRANKEY: If you're saying you stink, then I agree.

CHELSEA: At least we know Manetti doesn't have him yet either.

PRANKEY: The D.A.'s breathing down my neck. Damn social-climbing dilettante do-gooder sock-wearing peacock... What are you fiddling with?

CHELSEA: I found this lapel pin at the butcher shop. Funny design. I think Lucky may have dropped

PRANKEY: Well, la-de-da! If you hurry up and find him you can give it back!

(JACK enters)

JACK: I've got some news... The Fox was the shooter in the hit on Lucky. Ballistics match the bullets with those he fired off in Center City... the ones that took down my last partner. (hangs head, a brief pause) Also, I tracked down an eyewitness who caught a glimpse of him as he left the building across the street. A cleaning lady. She gave me a complete description.

BOGGS: Fantastic, man--

JACK: I'm not finished.. On the way I shut down a bookie joint by the park. Oh, and some kids didn't have reflectors on their bikes. I gave 'em a warning and bought 'em some ice cream... (flipping through pad) Helped an old lady across the street, delivered a baby in an elevator; the mom named him Jack...Oh! This is good! Turns out Manetti has a contingency hit planned on the D.A., his wife, his kids, his mistress, and his Malayan Longhair cat if the Lucky hit doesn't pan out. You might wanna get some men around him and his family. And the cat.

(A beat as the three look stunned.)

PRANKEY: (walks over and hugs JACK) Never, ever, ever leave here.

JACK: Just doing my job.

PRANKEY: (Goes to the phone) Get me the D.A.'s home. (Pointing To JACK) You --are going to take the night off.

BOGGS: Alright! You and me can hit the town and party down!

PRANKEY: Not you. You have an informant to find.

BOGGS: Aw, come on, Captain!

PRANKEY: Don't push me.

JACK: Wouldn't be much fun having the night free without Boggo, Captain.

PRANKEY: Well, I'm slapping all available men onto the D.A. Someone has to be out there looking.

(BOGGS looks at CHELSEA, then nudges PRANKEY)

PRANKEY: What do you say, Det. Chelsea? You mind covering this yourself?

CHELSEA: ... Fine. What do I need sleep for.

BOGGS: Groovy! Let's roll, buddy! (To CHELSEA) Oh, Chelsea...I just wanna say... (A significant beat) Don't expect me in too early, okay? (Exits)

PRANKEY: Hello, District Attorney Mandible? (chats silently)

JACK: Maybe you could join us some other time?

CHELSEA: Hm.

JACK: If you turn up anything, leave me a message at the hotel. I'll call back frequently.

CHELSEA: You can't just check on me with your x-ray vision?

JACK: ... I'm not your enemy, Detective. (Exits)

PRANKEY: (on phone) Alright, you don't have a mistress. Well, give me the address of your "just a friend" then...uh-huh...

(Lights down as CHELSEA looks thoughtfully off in JACK's direction.)

2.4 (Music. JACK and BOGGS down in The Dumps, into their cups. On the other side of the stage CHELSEA works diligently, looking thru files and scratching her head)

BOGGS: So I sez to him, "Buddy, if that's what "assume the position" means to you, you've been living in Frisco a little too long!"

JACK: (laughing) Oh, man...

BOGGS: Hey, 'member that time you went undercover as Fat Willy's shampoo bottle?

JACK: I couldn't arrest him until he rinsed and repeated.

BOGGS: Those were the days, I tell ya. Hey. Think you might ever come back to work here?

(CHELSEA on the phone, plays with pencil absent-mindedly, shakes head and slams phone down on cradle)

JACK: Naw, I couldn't-

BOGGS: Aw, c'mon...

JACK: It wouldn't be the same.

BOGGS: Sure it could! You and me teaming up... hey, we could even go back to that cabin up on Coogan's Cliffs!

JACK: Where we brought those two stewardesses? Is that shack still there?

BOGGS: Man, what a weekend! Completely cut off from the outside world, no one else around, no phones, no Capt. Pranke... just good times and two giggling girls from Stockholm.

JACK: Yeah, that was a hell of a place.

(CHELSEA playing paddleball, pacing back and forth, JANITOR sweeping around her)

BOGGS: Man, you gotta come back.

JACK: Times change, amigo. People change. Besides, you got a hell of a partner already.

BOGGS: Who? Oh, her.

JACK: "Oh her", yeah, yeah-

BOGGS: I guess she's alright-

JACK: If you looked a little more like that, maybe I would've stayed.

BOGGS: Hey, she's not all looks. She's got smarts too. Works her butt off. And man, can she fight. Like a little bulldog, just gets right in there! (punches air) Bubbity-bubbity-bubbity-

JACK: But she's just 'alright'.

(CHELSEA tired, rubbing eyes, glances over at pin, pulls it over to have a closer look)

BOGGS: We gonna bring down The Fox or what?

JACK: Leave The Fox to me. It's Lucky we need.

(Suddenly CHELSEA has an idea, she bolts up and gets her purse and exits)

BOGGS: Yeah, I betcha you're achin' to see Manetti in the slammer for good. After all the sweat you put into trying to nail him...

JACK: Yeah, Manetti...

BOGGS: We'll get him. We'll get 'em all. You and me. Top of the ma, world!

(BOGGS stands up, arm extended, then falls over flat on his face)

JACK: Barkeep! Another round!

(Blackout)

2.5 (Doorbell rings. Lights up. LORETTA, a bookish girl with glasses and pigtails, answers)

CHELSEA: Loretta Murdock?

LORETTA: Yes?

CHELSEA: (over-tired, shows badge) I'm Det. Chelsea. Sorry to bother you so late.

LORETTA: Actually, it's seven in the morning.

CHELSEA: Long night. Mind if I come in?

LORETTA: If we can make it quick. Before my morning classes I read to the blind children and I don't want to be late. They're very excited over the new book

CHELSEA: Oh? Which one is that?

LORETTA: "See Spot Run". May I ask what is this about?

CHELSEA: This pin, Loretta. Recognize it?

LORETTA: It's... a pin. With the Greek letters, Lambda Omega Pu. My sorority. But how--

CHELSEA: It was dropped at a crime scene. By someone we're desperately trying to find. Your brother.

LORETTA: My brother? I'm... I'm an only child. My family perished in a runaway merry-go-round accident.

CHELSEA: But your mother was married once before, wasn't she? To a Max Maxwell. With whom she had

a son named Lumpford.

LORETTA: I'm sure she would have said.

CHELSEA: But when they split up, the father took custody of the boy. Seven years later, your mother re-married and had you.

LORETTA: I... wasn't aware.

CHELSEA: I've been up all night checking marriage licenses, cross-referencing birth certificates, university records. Never mind that it was the middle of the night; I just did it. I know the person who's been paying your way through college is Lumpford Maxwell, otherwise known as 'Lucky', otherwise known as your half-brother!

LORETTA: All right... but I've never met him. He's my... unseen benefactor.

CHELSEA: How very Dickensian. I know you've been spending time with your brother on the beach. His last girlfriend saw you together a few weeks ago.

LORETTA: Well, I guess I'm not as smart as I think I am.

CHELSEA: I can skip the rest of the exposition if you can just tell me where he is.

LORETTA: (picking up pin) I gave this to him for good luck... (sniffs) Lumpford's in a lot of trouble, isn't he?

CHELSEA: Yes.

LORETTA: When my parents passed on, he took care of me... in secret. He didn't want his colleagues to know of my existence... or for me to be tied to anything he did. He wanted the best for me... to be "good 'n' educated 'n' junk", as he put it. I never asked exactly how he earned his money. I was afraid to... But he's such a kind and gentle person, the best big half-brother a kid half-sister could ever have. We would walk along the beach, and talk about our problems, me fitting in with my friends, and him fitting his friends with concrete shoes--

CHELSEA: Yeah, yeah! Look, I don't need your damn life story! Just tell me where he is!

LORETTA: I-I--

CHELSEA: (Grabs LORETTA by the shoulders) I've been up all night. My face is screaming for moisturizer and I only washed my hair twice yesterday. Talk!

LORETTA: He...he's staying at The Royale Flophouse on Grubley. Room 37.

CHELSEA: Thanks. Don't worry. We'll look after him.

(CHELSEA exits)

LORETTA: Oh, Lumpford! (throws herself onto chair, starts crying. Then changes her mind, and throws herself elsewhere, crying. Blackout)

2.6 (Riding in the Tarantula. JACK, CHELSEA, and a hungover BOGGS)

BOGGS: Hey, try not to jostle the car so much, okay?

JACK: You tracked Lucky down using this little pin?

CHELSEA: It was a lead. A slim one.

JACK: Detective April Chelsea... you are a marvel.

CHELSEA: Well, really it was nothing. I was fortunate his sister was willing to talk

BOGGS: Ohhhh... mind if we stop for some tomato juice. A barrelful.

JACK: Are you kidding me? Any other cop would've overlooked this for sure. Much less piece it together. Incredible.

CHELSEA: I'm sure Stunning Jack Stornoway could've figured it out.

BOGGS: Forget the barrel. Just get me a pail.

JACK: I doubt that. Man, Metro has no idea how good they have it with you around!

CHELSEA: You think so?

JACK: I know so! You're one in a million, April. Can I... call you April?

CHELSEA: Sure. And what shall I call you? Super Jack? Stupendous? Studly?

JACK: Just Jack.

CHELSEA: Okay... "Just Jack".

(They smile at each other, coyly.)

BOGGS: (bursting up from the backseat) Okay, I'm gonna hurl! Pull over!
(They do. Blackout. We hear it.)

2.7 (Room 37. LUCKY hears knock on the door.)

LUCKY: (scrambles, brandishing a coat hanger) Who is it?

BOGGS: Fresh towels.

LUCKY: I don't need none.

JACK: (knocks again) Free sandwiches.

LUCKY: I'm not hungry.

(A pause, whispering behind door, some disagreement)

CHELSEA: (Knocks again) Complimentary belly-dance.

LUCKY: ...Arabian or Hawaiian?

CHELSEA: ... Hawaiian.

LUCKY: Ehhh...

BOGGS: She means Arabian!

LUCKY: Oh, well okay then.

(Opens door. CHELSEA, BOGGS and JACK burst in)

LUCKY: Oh god! Don't kill me don't kill me don't kill me!

CHELSEA: Relax, Lucky! (shows badge) We're taking you back downtown!

BOGGS: Lot of people unhappy you went AWOL.

LUCKY: I guess I panicked.

JACK: (looking out window) Uh-oh.

CHELSEA: What is it?

JACK: Downstairs. You see that guy?

CHELSEA: In the sombrero?

JACK: No, behind him. Getting off the bicycle. That's... The Fox.

CHELSEA: Are you sure? He looks pretty fat.

JACK: I'm telling you, that's him. The description-- I'm sure of it. He's here for Lucky!

CHELSEA: How did he find us?

JACK: I'm gonna-I gotta take him down! I can nail him from here!

(JACK pulls out gun, sticks it out window)

BOGGS: Whoa, whoa, whoa! What are you doing?

JACK: That bastard killed my partner! I swore-

BOGGS: You can't just go blasting his head off!

JACK: I guess...

BOGGS: Let me do it! You're in my town, buddy. You just relax and watch the show.

JACK: He's my collar!

BOGGS: Forget it! I'm doing you a favour whether you like it or not!

JACK: The hell!

BOGGS: The hell on you!

CHELSEA: Stop it! Jack! Boggs and I will go!

JACK: But-

CHELSEA: You're too emotionally involved! Wait here with Lucky! (To BOGGS) Come on!

BOGGS: Okay, you take the back staircase-

(CHELSEA & BOGGS exit, leaving JACK alone with LUCKY.)

LUCKY: Don't worry about me. I'm just gonna sit tight.

(Jack turns a table on its side, places a chair on the floor)

LUCKY: What timing, you guys findin' me first. I sure got lucky there. Even without my good luck charm. Boy, did I dodge a bullet.

(JACK pulls out another gun from his jacket.)

LUCKY: What-what are you doing?

(JACK'S eyes are on LUCKY as he fires three shots into the wall behind himself)

LUCKY: Why are you doing that?!

JACK: I didn't do that.

(He puts the gun in LUCKY's hand)

JACK: You did.

LUCKY: What?!

JACK: (points own gun at LUCKY) Here's a little going-away gift... from Victor Manetti.

(LUCKY tries to fire but the gun is quite empty. LUCKY looks horrified. JACK smiles. He fires his gun once into LUCKY, who collapses to the floor. JACK jumps behind the table as BOGGS runs in)

BOGGS: What happened!?

JACK: He pulled it out of nowhere-took some shots at me--didn't give me any choice--

(BOGGS rushes over to LUCKY. CHELSEA runs in)

CHELSEA: Oh no!

(She runs to JACK)

CHELSEA: Are you alright?

JACK: I'm fine. How's he?

BOGGS: (With sufficient gravity) He's...dead!

(JACK buries his head into CHELSEA, who holds him in her arms, his head facing the audience.

NINJA brings in close-up frame on JACK, as he smiles. Big Sting! Blackout.)

INTERMEZZO!

3.1 (Blackout. We hear replay of dialogue from before intermission)

CHELSEA: Are you alright?

JACK: I'm fine. How's he?

BOGGS: (With sufficient gravity) He's...dead!

(Big sting)

BOGGS: No, wait! He's... alive!

(Lights up. Hospital waiting room, situated SR. CHELSEA, BOGGS, JACK.)

BOGGS: What else could you have done, buddy? You had no choice. It was you or him.

CHELSEA: Boggs is right, Jack. I guess he just wasn't going to come quietly.

JACK: My job was to protect him and look what happened!

BOGGS: We know the score. We'll back you up if there's any grief.

CHELSEA: Besides, he could pull through. You only wounded him.

JACK: Yeah... only wounded.

CHELSEA: It's too bad we didn't apprehend the Fox.

BOGGS: You're sure that was him out there?

JACK: Well, maybe not.

BOGGS: I thought you had a description of him.

JACK: Yeah, but... he's a master of disguise.

CHELSEA & BOGGS: Ohhhhh.

(DOCTOR enters)

BOGGS: Doc? How is he?

DOCTOR: He's dead.

(Everyone reacts)

DOCTOR: Oh, wait. You're here for Lumpford Maxwell. Sorry. He's fine. The bullet missed his vitals. I'd say he's a very lucky man.

JACK: Is he alert? Can he remember faces, events, and say, me shooting him, for instance?

DOCTOR: It's a little early to tell. But there is some nerve damage.

CHELSEA: Like what?

DOCTOR: The bullet grazed the part of his nervous system that controls his speech. He'll be unable to speak for the next 24 hours. Coincidentally, it also hit the nerves that control his writing hand, and the nerves for his accusatory pointing finger. Those are similarly affected.

JACK: So, for the next day he's completely unable to communicate.

DOCTOR: But only for a day.

BOGGS: And after that he'll be fine.

DOCTOR: Can't say.

BOGGS: What do you mean, you can't say?

DOCTOR: I can't say, because I don't have any more lines.

(DOCTOR abruptly exits)

CHELSEA: Wait! Can we see him?

(DOCTOR sticks his head back in, and gives a half-assed shrug)

BOGGS: Well, buddy, it must be a relief that Lucky's gonna pull through. (JACK doesn't answer) .Jack?

JACK: Hm? Oh, yeah, yeah.

(They enter LUCKY's room. He's sleeping on a hospital bed, oxygen mask, IV drip, the whole shebang.)

BOGGS: Aw, he looks so peaceful. Hey buddy! (shakes him)

CHELSEA: Boggs! He's resting!

BOGGS: No he's not. (shaking him) You asleep? Hey! See?

(LUCKY opens his eyes lethargically)

BOGGS: (loudly) How you doin', pal! Looks like you got lucky-

CHELSEA: Boggs, he's not deaf!

BOGGS: (quietly) -punk.

JACK: I'd like to apologize to him.

CHELSEA: That's very sweet, Jack.

(LUCKY gets all lethargic again. Boggs jolts him awake)

BOGGS: Lucky! Someone wants to rap with you!

(LUCKY sees JACK, recognition kicks in, and he tries to back away)

JACK: Lucky, I just wanted to say sorry I had to shoot you. But you forced my hand, didn't you? When you took those shots at me? You remember doing that?

(LUCKY shakes his head vigorously)

JACK: Sometimes shock affects your memory, Lucky. It makes you remember things wrong. Things that weren't actually said, or happened differently... you understand?

(He pinches LUCKY's breathing tube, out of the others' sight. LUCKY starts up)

JACK: You understand, right, Lucky?

(LUCKY nods)

BOGGS: (Noticing breathing tube) Uh, Jack...?

JACK: Oh. (Releases it) I forgive you for trying to kill me, Lucky. Tell you what, I won't mention it if you won't.

CHELSEA: Assaulting an officer. That could have added to his prospective jail time.

JACK: Who's to say I wouldn't do the same in his shoes. Running scared, desperate...

CHELSEA: True... too true...

JACK: I just want you to know, Lucky... I'm here for you.(Claps him hard on shoulder)

CHELSEA: Such sensitivity...

(PRANKEY enters)

BOGGS: Captain! What's shakin'?

PRANKEY: I'm stationing men around the hospital floor. I don't want to take any chances.

BOGGS: Maybe we get a couple flatfoots by the elevator and the stairs.

PRANKEY: Of course. And two plainclothes officers outside the door to his room.

CHELSEA: Do you think that'll be enough?

(CHELSEA walks over, while JACK surreptitiously pulls LUCKY's pillow out from under his head and places it over his face. The other three continue speaking, unawares)

PRANKEY: You're right. This Fox character is dangerous.

CHELSEA: Maybe we should even have a couple of officers disguised as doctors.

BOGGS: How about an undercover patient right here in the room.

PRANKEY: Like in another bed?

BOGGS: Yeah! We build a full body cast, and the cop's inside that.

CHELSEA: But he won't be able to move.

BOGGS: Well, it's not a real cast. It just looks like one. Just bandages.

(LUCKY is flailing around)

PRANKEY: What, like a mummy?

CHELSEA: I'd feel uncomfortable with that.

BOGGS: It doesn't have to be you in the cast.

CHELSEA: Would that offend our Egyptian officers to appropriate their culture like that?

PRANKEY: Ahmed is off sick.

BOGGS: He's not a mummy, he just looks like one!

PRANKEY: The Fox won't get this far anyway.

CHELSEA: I don't know, what do you think, Jack?

(They turn around. JACK takes the pillow off LUCKY's face)

JACK: (nonchalantly) And we'll just tuck that back right here. There you go, nice and comfy.

PRANKEY: I don't believe you.

JACK: (steely squint) What do you mean?

PRANKEY: Here this punk takes a couple of potshots at you and you're fluffing his pillow. What a cop!

CHELSEA: I'll say.

BOGGS: Hey, he's looking a little peaked. Let's let the little perp sleep.

(PRANKEY puts his arm around JACK. The four go back into waiting area.)

PRANKEY: Now listen, you've done a lot for us. I want you to relax.

JACK: I'd like to stay in the hospital. In case The Fox shows up.

PRANKEY: We'll have more boys in blue here than at a day-old sale at a donut shop.

JACK: But Captain, I feel so helpless. I've got a job to finish.

BOGGS: Listen to the man. Slack off a little, hero.

JACK: I--- fine.

PRANKEY: That's my boy. Here's the department Chargex card. Go for lunch. I really have to scope out the situation in the doctor's lounge.

BOGGS: Security?

PRANKEY: No, java.

(PRANKEY exits)

JACK: ...Wanna step out for a bite?

CHELSEA: I'd love to.

BOGGS: I got a pit growling too.

JACK: (puts arm around BOGGS) I meant just me and April, Boggo.

BOGGS: 'April'?

JACK: Det. Chelsea.

BOGGS: I knew that.

JACK: That is, if it's okay with you.

BOGGS: Oh... sure. Why wouldn't it be?

JACK: Groovy. First, I'm off to the little boy's room, powder my nose. Meet you downstairs?

CHELSEA: Count on it.

(She watches JACK as he exits. A beat.)

BOGGS: So...

CHELSEA: So...

BOGGS: You two are hitting it off, huh?

CHELSEA: Who? Oh, me and Jack. (flips hair absent-mindedly)

BOGGS: "Oh, me and Jack"! Gimme a break. You don't even like him.

CHELSEA: Don't you want the two of us to get along?

BOGGS: Yeah, I do... but-

CHELSEA: But what?

BOGGS: But-it's inapope... inapproat-it ain't right.

CHELSEA: How so?

BOGGS: Well-you-he-it--- I-it-you---look, it just ain't kosher, dig?

CHELSEA: Frankly, I don't 'dig'. What's really bothering you?

BOGGS: Well-you're my partner--- and --- he's my friend.

CHELSEA: How very possessive. I suppose this is your hospital and your floor and your air--

BOGGS: We got a case goin' down. You can't let emotions get in the way.

(Behind them, through the window, we can see JACK walking across the window ledge.)

CHELSEA: And you're the poster boy for rational thought. Why do you care?

BOGGS: I don't. Just that...Jack's got a history of messin' around with a lot of women...

CHELSEA: And who's to say I don't have an extensive inventory of paramours as well?

BOGGS: Uh...

CHELSEA: When it comes down to it, you don't really know much about me at all, do you?

BOGGS: Guess not.

CHELSEA: Unlike you and me, Jack and I share a rapport.

BOGGS: A what?

CHELSEA: (rolls eyes) Exactly.

(Meanwhile a NURSE has walked by them and into LUCKY's room.)

NURSE: AAAAAiiiiieeee!

(BOGGS and CHELSEA draw their guns, bursting in through the door. NURSE runs out)

BOGGS: Freeze, sucker!

(LUCKY is hanging half out the window. JACK is holding him there, and turns around)

CHELSEA: Jack?

BOGGS: What are you doing?!

(Enter PRANKEY, coffee bag in IV drip in his arm, with NURSE)

PRANKEY: What in blue blazes!

BOGGS: How'd you get in here?

JACK: Through the window.

(They all look at him for a moment)

PRANKEY: I don't believe it...

(JACK reaches behind his back for his gun, for only the audience to see)

PRANKEY: What a cop! Finding the holes in our security like that! Unbelievable.

(JACK puts his gun back)

PRANKEY: I'll get some boys stationed in here too. Maybe a couple on the ledge disguised as pigeons. Good work! The Fox will never get in now.

JACK: Apparently not.

CHELSEA: Excellent, Jack!

BOGGS: Yeah... excellent, Jack. Didn't you have a nose to powder?

CHELSEA: Captain. I had a thought. Lucky's sister. What if The Fox tries to strike at Lucky through her?

JACK: (Realization hits him) Yeah!

(They turn to JACK)

JACK: I mean, she's right. If The Fox got a hold of his sister as a hostage, Lucky wouldn't dare to testify if he ever wanted to see his precious sister alive again. In fact, I'm sure he wouldn't talk about anything at all. (squeezes LUCKY'S shoulder) Isn't that right, Lucky?

CHELSEA: He's nodding to you, Jack. He must like your idea.

NURSE: We'd better let him rest. (Gets needle and injects LUCKY)

JACK: Remember, Lucky.

(She ushers them out to waiting area as LUCKY falls asleep.)

JACK: Captain. This is too important for me to be left out. I demand to be assigned to guard the sister.

PRANKEY: Holy Hannah, what a cop. Alright. You two look after it. Get her to the secret safehouse, you know the one.

BOGGS: Consider it done, Captain.

PRANKEY: I was talking to Jack and Det. Chelsea. Jack, you should really think about coming back. We need a man on the force like you.

CHELSEA: Yes, what a great idea.

BOGGS: I don't know, he's got it pretty good in Center City.

JACK: It's looking pretty good for me here too...

(CHELSEA and JACK leave)

BOGGS: Now wait a second, Captain-

PRANKEY: I don't want to hear it-

BOGGS: But Captain-

PRANKEY: Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah! Give it a rest!

BOGGS: You don't even know what I'm going to say!

PRANKEY: "She's my partner!"

BOGGS: Okay, maybe you do. Look, something's not right here. About Jack.

PRANKEY: Jealous?

BOGGS: No way.

PRANKEY: Maybe you should be, buddy boy... maybe you should be.

(PRANKEY exits, BOGGS is left rubbing his chin thoughtfully. Blackout)

3.2 (CHELSEA and JACK in JACK's car with LORETTA)

LORETTA: I shouldn't be here. I should be visiting Lumpford!

CHELSEA: There'll be time for that later. Right now it's you we're worried about.

LORETTA: You really think I'm in danger?

CHELSEA: We need to ensure The Fox can't find you. Don't worry, you'll be perfectly safe.

JACK: That's right, we'll take care of you... good care.

CHELSEA: Why did you say it like that?

JACK: No reason.

CHELSEA: You missed the turn, Jack.

JACK: No, I didn't.

CHELSEA: The safehouse is back there, down at the end of Lonely Street.

JACK: I've got somewhere better in mind.

CHELSEA: But, Jack, we're assigned there.

JACK: The Fox is smart. He could figure that out.

CHELSEA: But Captain Prankey-

JACK: I talked to him already. He's aware of it. He trusts me... don't you?

CHELSEA: Certainly. So where are we going?

JACK: Someplace no one will find us.

CHELSEA: Good thinking.

JACK: Yes... very good.

CHELSEA: ...There you go again.

JACK: What?

CHELSEA: That slow, repetitive emphasis. Why?

JACK: No reason!

(They drive off)

3.3 (Precinct. BOGGS at his desk, piles of papers 'n' crap all over it, he's going through a file)

BOGGS: (mocking voice) 'Maybe you should be, buddy boy, maybe you should be...'..."Buddy boy"... "Oh, Jack! You're so sweet"... Grrr... Hey... hold on here. (BOGGS starts up, flips through another file on his desk, pulls out sheet portentously) I don't get this...

(PRANKEY comes in, looking for coffee)

BOGGS: Captain, something funny going on. About Jack.

PRANKEY: Sour grapes still?

BOGGS: No, this homicide report. Something don't jive here. This is the same cleaning woman Jack interviewed... the eyewitness who saw The Fox. Forensics say she died between nine and ten yesterday.

PRANKEY: So?

BOGGS: Between nine and ten. Jack logged here that he interviewed her about noon. But according to this report, she was already dead...

PRANKEY: What's Jack doing interviewing a dead woman?

BOGGS: Maybe it's some fancy Center City technique we don't know about.

PRANKEY: I don't have time for this. The DA's on his way down to see me. I tell you, if I hear one more word about the Lucky case from that mincing, puffed-out popinjay I'm going to take his tacky little toupee and shove it down his Ivy League throat!

(D.A. MANDIBLE has already entered. BOGGS points and PRANKEY turns around)

BOGGS: Hello, District Attorney Mandible!

MANDIBLE: Hello, Captain Pranke. By the way, it's a hair weave.

PRANKEY: In that case, it's quite flattering.

BOGGS: What brings you down to our happy little hive?

MANDIBLE: My star witness isn't talking!

PRANKEY: Well, in case you forgot, he got shot, sir.

MANDIBLE: I know that! His speech has returned. What I mean is, he's not going to testify!

BOGGS and PRANKEY: Whaaaaaat?

MANDIBLE: I saaaaaaiid-he's recanting his testimony! Claims he's 'forgot everything'!

BOGGS: Somebody must have gotten to him... but who?

MANDIBLE: Without him, we have no case! The trial begins tomorrow! I don't plan to lose because your sorry little circus of a department mishandled his recovery! If Lucky doesn't testify, I'll be suggesting to the commissioner that this whole department be under review!

PRANKEY: You're not having problems with your mistress, are you?

MANDIBLE: She dumped me for the cop you assigned to her.

PRANKEY: Awwww..

MANDIBLE: But that doesn't change a hair of what I said! I want action or I'll bring the full weight of my office crashing down on your pathetic mess of a precinct !

(Enter LT. BACON and LT. FRY)

BOGGS: Who are you creeps?

BACON: I'm Lt. Bacon, this is Lt. Fry. We're from Internal Affairs.

PRANKEY: Oh my god!

(BOGGS and PRANKEY suck in their guts and stand at attention, BOGGS attempts to clean his desk)

BACON: ...From Center City.

(BOGGS and PRANKEY deflate, BOGGS rescatters his desk)

BOGGS: Cripes, don't scare us like that.

FRY: We're here about John "Jack" Stornoway.

PRANKEY: Ah, his transfer. Yes, I've requested it. On his behalf.

BOGGS: You did?!

FRY: We want him.

PRANKEY: Sorry, Charlie. Dollars to donuts he's coming back to the Pacific team.

FRY: I'm not sure what you mean. You've spoken to him?

PRANKEY: I'm not sure what you mean. Of course I've spoken to him.

(BACON and FRY exchange a look)

FRY: Where is he?

PRANKEY: He's on a case. You Center City folks sure don't keep very good track of your people, do you?
(Shakes his head to BOGGS)

BACON: Stornoway hasn't been part of 'our' people for quite some time.

PRANKEY: Huh?

BACON: He's suspended. Has been for months.

BOGGS: Back the truck up. What do you mean?

BACON: A number of improprieties. Allegedly he was taking payoffs from the Center City mafia. We're treating the death of his last partner as suspicious as well.

PRANKEY: There must be some mistake here. I'm talking about Jack Stornoway.

FRY: So are we. He disappeared shortly after we started investigating.

BACON: When his name came over the wire, we had to follow up.

MANDIBLE: Stornoway. That's your officer who shot Lucky Maxwell?

BACON: You had him working on a case?

FRY: You didn't even check his credentials?

MANDIBLE: Where is he now?

PRANKEY: Well I-I-I-I---.... Irma! Get the Lonely Street safehouse on the horn!

(PRANKEY exits quickly)

BOGGS: This don't quite wash yet. You're saying Jack is dirty?

FRY: As a bikini in a mud-wrestling ring.

BOGGS: You sure this isn't some kind of frame-up? I mean, Jack Stornoway! Super, Stomping, Smooth, Jack Stornoway.

BACON: Add to that "Sneaky".

FRY: And "Scumbag".

(BOGGS grabs FRY by the lapels, then thinks about it, and grabs BACON too)

BOGGS: You jokers better be on the level! Jack saved my life!

BACON: And another cop is dead because of him. And who knows what else.

BOGGS: If you drag a good cop's name through the dirt without the goods to back it, I'm gonna do a little internal affairs of my own, with my fists!

FRY: Who are you angry at? Us? Or yourself?

BOGGS: (thinks a beat) You.

(PRANKEY enters)

PRANKEY: They never arrived!

BOGGS: They should've been there last night!

PRANKEY: The officers I sent to spell them off say the house hadn't been touched!

BOGGS: Well, then where the hell are they?

(Everyone does a take out to the audience for long sting)

3.4 (Cabin on Coogan's Cliffs. LORETTA with CHELSEA and JACK)

LORETTA: It truly is beautiful up here. Look how you can see the entire road down the mountain to the highway. Wow, I get dizzy just looking down.

CHELSEA: How far down would you say that is, Jack? About... one-thousand, three hundred and sixty-two feet?

JACK: At least.

CHELSEA: So you used to come to this cabin with Boggs?

JACK: Years ago. Hunters use it in the fall to bring their prey.

LORETTA: I just wish I wasn't so worried about poor Lumpford.

JACK: Trust me, I'm sure he's better off knowing you're safe.

LORETTA: If only I could call him.

JACK: That's the beauty of being here. No one can call us. No one can find us. No one anywhere has any idea we're up here.

CHELSEA: Except Capt. Prankey.

JACK: Oh yeah, sure.

CHELSEA: Hey, Loretta, maybe you should turn in.

LORETTA: It's only 5:30. Ohh... I get you. I'll be in my bunk in the cabin. (Walks off)

JACK: Nice kid.

CHELSEA: Shame she has to be put through this. But, once it's all said and done, everything will be fine for her.

JACK: Yes... once it's done..

CHELSEA: There you go with that cryptic talk again.

JACK: Must be a speech impediment.

CHELSEA: I'm sure there are better ways to be using your lips...

(They kiss, then sit , JACK around CHELSEA)

JACK: Good thing I've got my shoes on?

CHELSEA: Why's that?

JACK: Or my socks would've been blown right off.

CHELSEA: You always know the right thing to say, don't you.?

JACK: Uh....um...

CHELSEA: I knew it. (they smooch again) You know, it's funny.

JACK: What?

CHELSEA: You. Just coming out of nowhere, sweeping me off my feet like this...And yet I hardly know anything about you.

JACK: Don't you like a touch of mystery?

CHELSEA: I'm a detective. Mysteries are to be solved.

JACK: What you see is what you get. Let me get some wood. We can have a fire tonight.

CHELSEA: Won't that alert people that we're here?

JACK: Behind the cabin. We'll have a small one.

CHELSEA: Something tells me there are no small fires with you, Jack Stornoway.

(JACK collects firewood, maybe from a NINJA behind curtain, who piles it up for him)

CHELSEA: Can I be honest with you?

JACK: Shoot.

CHELSEA: When I first saw you, I must admit, I didn't like you very much.

JACK: Oh?

CHELSEA: You were showing me up. With the Captain, with Boggs. I didn't like that.

JACK: Sorry...

CHELSEA: But now...

JACK: Yes?

CHELSEA: Things have changed.

JACK: Really?

(Lights dim and spot on CHELSEA over course of her line)

CHELSEA: When we found Lucky, and I heard those shots, my heart leapt. I thought the worst. But you were fine. Then when I reached to help you up, we touched hands. I felt something... I looked down at yours, both covered in powder burns, our fingers clasped together.... Though thinking about it, why both your hands had powder burns, I don't quite understand. I mean, you're right-handed. If you fired a single shot from your right hand, what was powder doing on your left hand? Come to think about it, when we brought Lucky in... there were no burns on his hands at all. Nearly impossible if he fired three shots.... Unless....he didn't....! ...Jack?

(She turns, just as Jack brings a log down, K.O.'ing her.. Blackout. Sting! Ominous chord.)

JACK: Pretty smart, April. Too bad, I liked that about you. Unfortunately, you were just a little too smart for your own good. Even a fox like you couldn't outfox... The Fox! I could really have fallen for you...Now it's time for you to do the same...off the edge of the cliff!

(A beat) Hey, that's pretty good.

(He has picked her up and carried her to the Cliffside. Big sting. Blackout.)

Commercial 2- More "Impulsion"

WOMAN- Danika

MAN- Matt

VENDOR- Dan

ELEVATOR NINJAS-

COP- Tyler or Dan?

ANNOUNCER- Jeff

(Same initial set-up as Commercial 1- VENDOR on SR at desk, with basket of flowers. MAN reads paper as WOMAN walks by. He lowers paper, turns to sniff her scent. WOMAN proceeds to escalator- a sheet held diagonally by NINJAS. She rides up it, as MAN grabs flowers, throws a \$20 at the bewildered VENDOR as he chases her up the escalator, then shoves the flowers at her. She refuses them as they get to the top of the escalator, but MAN is insistent.)

ANNOUNCER: "Impulsion"... The new fragrance for women.

(Finally she accepts them as COP enters SL, confronts MAN. MAN sniffs air again, then grabs the flowers from WOMAN and gives them to COP. COP smiles, and he and MAN walk off arm in arm SR, leaving the WOMAN standing confused.)

ANNOUNCER: And now new "Impulsion... For Men".

(Blackout)

ANNOUNCER: Now... the conclusion of ... "Chelsea & Boggs"!

4.1 (BOGGS in Tarantula SR. PRANKEY on radio SL. BOGGS' siren is going.)

PRANKEY: Boggs! What's happening?

BOGGS: Nada so far, Captain!

PRANKEY: What?

BOGGS: I said we got nothing!

PRANKEY: I can't hear a thing you're saying!

BOGGS: You'll have to speak up! I can't hear a thing you're saying!

PRANKEY: Will you turn off that dad-blamed siren?

BOGGS: What?

PRANKEY: I said turn off your siren!

BOGGS: Hold on, Captain, I'm gonna have to turn off my siren. (does so) What was that?

PRANKEY: Any sign of them?

BOGGS: Batting zero. Scoped out all Jack's old haunts. Everywhere Chelsea hangs too, even the -ugh-library.

PRANKEY: And nothing, eh?

BOGGS: Well, I did find a copy of "See Spot Run". Never did finish it.

PRANKEY: Dad-blast it! I've got every available man, woman, chimp, sassy robot and space alien on the force looking for them. Nobody's seen anything!

BOGGS: Don't worry, Captain. I'll find them.

PRANKEY: Where would somebody go with two women if they didn't want to be found?

BOGGS: The Crown Motel on Mulfinland Drive?

PRANKEY: Ah, yes! The one with the round beds.

BOGGS: ... I wouldn't know.

PRANKEY: Well, uh, me neither. I mean, I've heard stories-

BOGGS: I checked it already, Captain. By the way, the desk clerk said to say hi.

PRANKEY: Harrumph! Well, keep looking! Damn it! I still don't get it! Jack is dirty? He's always been a model cop!

BOGGS: Only that one catalogue shoot. Wait a minute... you're onto something, Captain. I think I know where they are.

(BOGGS spins car around dramatically)

PRANKEY: What do you mean?

BOGGS: Stewardesses!

PRANKEY: Stewardesses?!

BOGGS: Model... runway... plane... flight... stewardesses! I'm playing a hunch here! I'll radio back if it pans out! (Drives off)

PRANKEY: Stewardesses? I thought he already checked out the Crown Motel!

4.2 (Back at the Cabin on Coogan's Cliffs. JACK is standing at cliff edge.)

JACK: Farewell, April. You really took a 'tumble' for me...'head over heels'...heh heh. Ah, I'm inspired today.

(A beat) I should probably look down to make sure she landed at the bottom.

LORETTA: (offstage) Det. Stornoway? Det. Chelsea?

(JACK spins around)

LORETTA: (entering) I thought I heard the distinct sound of cedar thumping on skullbone. Is anything wrong?

JACK: Ah... no.

LORETTA: Oh, good. Where's Det. Chelsea?

JACK: She... went to get some ice cream.

LORETTA: There's no fridge up here.

JACK: (at a loss for a beat) ...Well, I guess we'll have to eat it quickly then, won't we?

LORETTA: Why didn't she take the car?

JACK: She didn't want to alert anybody to our presence here by stopping at a gas station.

LORETTA: So she just decided she was going to walk all the way down the treacherous mountain road and then the five miles back to the outskirts of town just to get some ice cream that will most likely melt before she even halfway returns?

JACK: Yes.

LORETTA: Oh. What kind of ice cream?

JACK: Boy, you sure ask a lot of questions, don't you.

LORETTA: Do I?

JACK: Why don't you go back in the cabin and relax that inquisitive little head of yours and let us police look after protecting you. All right?

LORETTA: What if Det. Chelsea's spotted by that car?

JACK: What car?

LORETTA: The red one racing up the mountain road. Look, you can see it from here.

JACK: (turns and looks out over the cliff) Damn. Loretta, in the cabin there's my large black briefcase. Could you get it for me, please?

LORETTA: Why?

JACK: I've got some bug repellent in it.

(LORETTA runs off)

(Crossfade to BOGGS driving Tarantula up mountain road)

BOGGS: I hope I'm wrong, Jack. I hope this is all some goofy, nutty misunderstanding!

(Suddenly a blam! The car shakes)

BOGGS: Cripes! Must've blown a tire! No time to change it! Gotta keep going!

(Another blam)

BOGGS: Another one! Man! The potholes in these roads! Still, can't slow down! Every second counts!

(A third blam)

BOGGS: What are the odds?! Still got one good tire though! Nothing's stopping The Tarantula!

(A fourth shot. The car grinds to a halt.)

BOGGS: Except maybe that.

(Crossfade to Cliffside. JACK lowers his rifle with gun-sight. LORETTA is right beside him)

JACK: Loretta, we have to abandon camp. The mob knows we're here. We'll take the back roads, down the other side of the escarpment away from town.

LORETTA: But... Det. Chelsea? Won't she wonder where we've gone, why we've left the cliffs?

JACK: I'm sure she'll get to the bottom of it. (Laughs to self)

LORETTA: That sounded awfully cryptic.

JACK: Never mind. Come on!

(Drags her off. We hear car starting and driving away)

4.3 (Over the edge of the cliff. An unconscious CHELSEA is hanging by her purse strap from a tiny little branch extending from the cliff face. The branch shifts slightly, jarring CHELSEA and waking her)

CHELSEA: Ohhh... my head.... Where am I... (Looks down) Oh. That's not good. Jack! (then it comes back to her) Jack... ! 1362 feet looks a lot farther down when suspended by this extremely tiny but incredibly strong branch extending from the cliff face.

(The branch groans and shifts, dropping CHELSEA. She grabs onto the bottom of her purse as the strap dangles precariously)

CHELSEA: This is terrible! It's stretching the heck out of the strap of my new Italian leather purse. Not to mention I'll never stop Jack, or make Commissioner, and... and most important of all... I'll never be able to tell Boggs how I really feel about him!

BOGGS: (appearing over cliff edge) Don't smoke that turkey yet, college girl!

CHELSEA: Boggs!

(He reaches down, grabs the strap of the purse, and hauls her up and over the side of the cliff)

BOGGS: Now what was that you had to tell me?

CHELSEA: What?

BOGGS: About how you really feel?

CHELSEA: About you?

BOGGS: Yeah.

CHELSEA: All right...you're a jerk. But thanks. Where's Jack and Loretta?

BOGGS: Amscrayed. Neither hide nor blow-dried hair to be found. But they didn't pass me on the road up.

CHELSEA: Boggs, about Jack-he's-

BOGGS: I know.

CHELSEA: You do?

BOGGS: That's why I'm here. And I s'pose why you were hangin' off a cliff, huh?

CHELSEA: We have to catch him while there's still time.

BOGGS: There's a dozen routes heading down the other side. Even if we chose the right one, he's got a helluva lead.

CHELSEA: Maybe we can radio the state troopers--

BOGGS: We'll never get them all closed off in time. And the Tarantula's down for the count.

CHELSEA: Again? So how did you get here?

(HIPPIE 1 and HIPPIE 2 enter)

HIPPIE 1: Woah, heavy! This is far-out, man!

BOGGS: Thanks for the ride, guys.

HIPPIE 2: It's all good karma, man. Man, we could get an outta sight lift offa here.

HIPPIE 1: Yeah, groovy updraft, man.

CHELSEA: What are you two talking about?

HIPPIE 2: We're gonna soar with the eagles through the breath of Brahma on wings of gossamer.

CHELSEA: (To BOGGS) Can you translate? I don't speak hippie.

BOGGS: They're gettin' high.

HIPPIE 1: Naw, man! Hang-gliding. You grok me?

CHELSEA: Hang-gliding! Boggs, are you thinking what I'm thinking?

BOGGS: Are you thinking about Swedish stewardesses in their panties having a pillow fight?

CHELSEA: I'm not.

BOGGS: Then no.

CHELSEA: (rolls eyes, then grabs BOGGS) Come on!

(CHELSEA pulls BOGGS offstage, leaving the 2 HIPPIES. Then CHELSEA comes back on and pulls them off too)

HIPPIE 2: Groovy!

4.4 (JACK driving with LORETTA in JACK's car)

LORETTA: Where are we going?

JACK: We have to get out of Pacific City for a while. It's gonna get a little hot there.

LORETTA: Are we not taking the highway?

JACK: Can't take the chance we'll be spotted.

LORETTA: Are the mobsters really everywhere?

JACK: Closer than you think.

(A beat)

LORETTA: I really have to pee.

JACK: Now you tell me.

4.5 (CHELSEA and BOGGS, both wearing goggles, hanging onto hang-glider)

CHELSEA: Isn't this beautiful? We can see the entire mountainside. Look at the lake over there! (A bird flies by) This experience can best be summed up with a simple "Wow".

BOGGS: Y-yeah, I-Jesus! Um, there's -uh-nothin' holdin' us up, y'know? Um, how far down do you think everything is? Cripes-

CHELSEA: Well, we caught a bit of an updraft off the mountain... right now I'd say we're cruising at about fifteen hundred feet.

BOGGS: You-you really know how to fly one of these?

CHELSEA: No. Do you?

BOGGS: That's nowhere close to what I wanted to hear.

CHELSEA: Feeling a little nervous, you big strong man, you?

BOGGS: I work the street, college girl! That's where I like my feet-on the street?! Not dangling willy-nilly off some crazy mountain holding onto a magnum-sized hankie!

CHELSEA: We need the bird's eye view to see which direction Jack took. Plus, we get a decent wind behind us, we can get speed upwards of sixty miles an hour up here. That'll catch us up in no time. It's the only way!

BOGGS: Then what? Just let go and aim for a nice soft patch of granite?

CHELSEA: We'll figure that out once we see him. Oh, look! There he is!

BOGGS: ... I really have to pee.

CHELSEA: Now you tell me. Okay, let's try leaning it over this way....

(They start spinning out of control downward)
BOGGS: AAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!
(Finally they pull it up)
CHELSEA: Okay, maybe that's a little too much. Very clever, Boggs. You're tucking in so we get more speed.
BOGGS: No, I'm tucking in so I don't vomit.
CHELSEA: Well, whatever it is, it's working! We're gaining on him
(JACK and LORETTA appear, driving in car)
LORETTA: Det. Stornoway, look! A UFO!
JACK: (looks in rear-view mirror, sees hang-glider) How the hell?
CHELSEA: He's speeding up.
BOGGS: Musta spotted us.
CHELSEA: He can't go too fast on these dirt roads. But we can't let him reach the highway. We have to climb higher, catch a strong wind stream.
BOGGS: We're too heavy.
CHELSEA: Perhaps. From what I understand, these aren't really built for two people.
BOGGS: Huh?!

CHELSEA: That's probably why we're having so much trouble controlling it. But I think I'm starting to get the hang of it.
(They move upwards)
BOGGS: My ears are popping like corn!
CHELSEA: Back on track! We're catching up again.
LORETTA: So those are flying mobsters?
JACK: Yeah, mobsters, right!
(JACK tries to lose them, turning this way and that. CHELSEA and BOGGS echo his moves.)
BOGGS: Enough chase. Bring 'er in low!
CHELSEA: Okay....
(They sail downwards, almost directly above but slightly behind JACK's car)
JACK: Loretta, take the wheel.
(She does. JACK leans out and takes a couple of shots at them)
BOGGS: Pull up before we're picked off like pigeons!
CHELSEA: We can't seem to gain altitude.
BOGGS: Then we make our stand here... (reaches into pocket and pulls out gun, which causes him to drop, hanging only by one arm) Cripes!
CHELSEA: Boggs!
BOGGS: Just keep steering! I'm fine!
CHELSEA: It's not that!
(BOGGS takes a couple of shots at the tires, JACK fires back)
CHELSEA: Boggs, get back up here, you're throwing us off-balance!
BOGGS: Bring me in close!
CHELSEA: There's not enough air current to keep us aloft!
(BOGGS hits one of JACK's tires, which causes him to begin skidding out)
BOGGS: That's one less I owe you, buddy...
CHELSEA: Boggs we're going to crash!
(JACK's car skids off the road SR, while CHELSEA and BOGGS back through SR curtain. JACK and LORETTA sit, recovering. Behind them a small foot & a half wide model hang-glider, with Chelsea and Boggs figures attached, flies across the stage on a wire, CHELSEA and BOGGS screaming all the way, until it crashes off SL. JACK gets a shaken LORETTA from the car. A slightly soiled CHELSEA and BOGGS, his gun drawn, stagger from SR)

LORETTA: Det. Chelsea! Did you bring the ice cream?

JACK: (with gun to LORETTA's head) Don't move another muscle, or, well, you know the drill. If my hands weren't occupied I'd applaud you both. April, you continue to amaze. That you're standing here at all impresses me beyond belief.

CHELSEA: No thanks to you.

JACK: And Boggo, well, maybe you aren't completely the dunderhead I left six years ago.

BOGGS: Seems neither of us know each other too well now. Or ever did.

LORETTA: I'm confused, Det. Stornoway. Is Det. Chelsea a mobster undercover as a policewoman then? Or is she a mobster disguised as Det. Chelsea? And either way, why do you have a gun to my head?

JACK: Well, um, there's a very good explanation, Loretta, I-ah, the hell with it! Shut up!

BOGGS: Why'd you do it, Jack? Turn dirty?

JACK: Turn dirty? You don't get it, buddy. I've been working for Manetti from day one.

BOGGS: What? But your record--

JACK: For every bust I made, I let two others go by. It was our deal. He gave me info in exchange for making sure his real operations played through. So what if Manetti lost a few numbers runners or glue peddlers? No skin off his neck when million-dollar deals went undisturbed. And I was happy to help. Built a rep and socked some green away too.

BOGGS: I was with you on some of those busts...

JACK: That's why you were so good to work with. You were too dumb to notice. Not like my last partner.

CHELSEA: He found you out and was going to reveal the truth.

JACK: Worse. He wanted a cut in. Anyway, things were going a little too well here. I didn't want more attention. So I lit out for Center City, doing, shall I say, 'contract' work. But I still owed Manetti, so I came back here at his request.

CHELSEA: And when you missed Lucky the first time, you used us to help you find him.

JACK: Brains and beauty. If you weren't so pure I'd invite you along.

CHELSEA: Sorry. Men who try to kill me lose their ability to turn me on.

BOGGS: Man, I looked up to you. I wanted to be you. All those years... now I find out you're nothing but a cheap punk. Worse, even. People give you their trust and you abuse it.

JACK: You really know how to bring a mood down, buddy.

BOGGS: Let her go, Jack.

JACK: Are you kidding? The Fox always finishes a job.

BOGGS: I'll settle The Fox's hash later. I'm taking you down first.

JACK: Uh... what?

CHELSEA: I thought you said-(rolls eyes) You want to tell him or shall I?

JACK: Ladies first.

CHELSEA: Boggs... Jack is The Fox.

BOGGS: (A beat)...I knew that. What are you gonna do? The state troopers will be here any minute anyway.

JACK: You always were lousy at poker, Boggo. Don't bluff me.

BOGGS: This is between you and me. Let the girl go.

JACK: Sorry, pal.

BOGGS: You and me, no guns. You make me say "uncle", you walk. If not, you're my guest back to the station.

CHELSEA: Boggs...

BOGGS: Stay outta this. What do you say, Stormin' Jack? Or should that be "Scaredy-cat"?

JACK: (thinks a moment, then throws LORETTA aside, drops his gun) You're on. And this time I'm not going easy on you.

BOGGS: (drops gun) I wouldn't have it any other way.

(They begin circling one another.)

CHELSEA: Boggs...

JACK: I always knew it would come down to this.

BOGGS: Just you and me, pal.

(Suddenly, LORETTA appears with a tire iron, and wallops JACK on the back of the head. He crumples to the ground.)

BOGGS: I said just him and me!

LORETTA: Sorry, I didn't hear.

BOGGS: Aw, cripes! (Starts shaking JACK) C'mon, wake up! Aw, geez!

(CHELSEA comes over, shaking her head, as BOGGS tries to slap JACK awake. Lights down.)

4.6 (Precinct. PRANKEY, BOGGS and CHELSEA)

PRANKEY: So Manetti will be going to prison for a nice extended stay. Lucky's testimony today clinched the case.

CHELSEA: I imagine he'll be joined shortly by a certain ex-detective.

BOGGS: "Jailbird Jack".

PRANKEY: (shaking head) You two must feel pretty sheepish.

CHELSEA: How so, Captain?

PRANKEY: All this time, The Fox, pulling the wool over your eyes. I had my suspicions from the start about that boy.

BOGGS: Oh, give us a break!

PRANKEY: It's true! 'Keep your friends close, but your enemies even closer'.

BOGGS: Explains why you and I never got along, eh, Captain?

CHELSEA: How so?

BOGGS: Well, we aren't close at all, therefore we're not enemies, so we must be friends, and.. hold on...if we aren't friends, then we wouldn't be close, so we must be- (continues to work it through)

PRANKEY: (To CHELSEA) Good work, Det. Chelsea.

CHELSEA: Thanks, Captain.

(PRANKEY exits)

CHELSEA: I like to think we learned a little something from this whole affair.

BOGGS: Oh yeah? Lay it on me.

CHELSEA: I think we appreciate each other's presence a little more than we let on.

BOGGS: Yeah... but I'd never admit it. Speaking of presents...(pulls out gift)

CHELSEA: Boggs, that's so sweet. As a matter of fact, I picked up something for you too (also produces gift)

BOGGS: You first.

CHELSEA: No, you.

BOGGS: How about at the same time.

(They both unwrap each other's gifts. Each holds up a pet rock.)

BOGGS and CHELSEA: (simultaneously, with false enthusiasm) Thanks...!

(Freeze for Blackout, cutesy outro music)

ANNOUNCER: Stay tuned, for scenes from the next episode of... "Chelsea & Boggs"!

TRAILER: "Those Darn Satanists!"

ANNOUNCER: Next time... on "Chelsea and Boggs"...

(BOGGS in bed sitting up, under sheet is JENNY)

BOGGS: Hell of a night. Man, those tequila shots were murder!

(He lifts sheet back and JENNY is quite dead. From under the sheet, he pulls out his hand, in it a bloody dagger. BOGGS does a shocked double take at it. 2 BEAT COPS burst in, guns drawn)

BEAT COP 1: Freeze! (BOGGS puts his hands up. They drag him to chair)

PRANKEY: You're telling us you just met her last night at a disco and the next thing you remember is waking up next to her corpse!

CHELSEA: You really know how to show a girl a good time.

BOGGS: I've been set up!

CHELSEA:(handed paper from offstage) It gets better. She's the Mayor's daughter!

(They all gasp)

MAYOR: (in top hat and sash) City Council unanimously decrees that Det. Boggs shall be torn apart by wild horses-- at the Children's Charity Picnic tomorrow!

BEAT COP 2: (nursing groin) Captain! He's escaped!

BOGGS: (running) The only way to clear my name is to find the real killer myself! (slows down for a sec)... I guess...! (keeps running)

CHELSEA: We've got to find him quick! He's only making things worse!

PRANKEY: I'll say! Without Boggs at that picnic, we stand to lose the policemen's sack race!

GINGER: Jenny got hooked into a weird crowd. She was hanging out with... Lucifer Mandrake.

BOGGS: Lucifer Mandrake? The Satanic Pope?

GINGER: No, Lucifer Mandrake, the insurance salesman!

LUCIFER MANDRAKE: (To CHELSEA) Jenny did volunteer work for us. Organizing luncheons, typing newsletters, mixing goat's blood, that sort of thing.

SWEETBOX: It's a devil of a time in the ol' town tonight!

CHELSEA: (looks through files) The Church Of Satan was receiving city money... through the Mayor's office?!

BOGGS: I'll be damned!

(BRUNO knocks them both out with one blow from behind)

BRUNO: You should be so lucky!

CAPT. McGONIGLE: (to PRANKEY, standing in sack) Well, Wallace, if your ringer doesn't get here soon, Precinct 12 wins again!

(BOGGS held by BRUNO and HOODED SATANIST. MANDRAKE with ceremonial knife, the same as BOGGS had, over CHELSEA, gagged, spread-eagled on the platform)

MANDRAKE: Prepare to meet the One True Lord Of The World! (raises dagger)

BOGGS: Wait! ...Aren't you supposed to sacrifice a virgin?

LUCIFER: (A beat. Then, to CHELSEA) Mind if we ask a personal question?

(CHELSEA squints intently at both of them)

ANNOUNCER: That's next time... on "Chelsea & Boggs"!

CORE

a play with music by Jason Rip

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TIME: 9:30 on a warm June night.

PLACE: The downtown core of a medium-sized city.

The set is composed of cables, coming down from the ceiling and anchored with cinder blocks. These cables are wrapped in various scraps of fabric. To far stage-right, there is the dirty window through which we can see the interior of Hopper's Coffee Shop. BERTRAND RUSSO, the proprietor, is wiping the counter. Another fellow, HOAGIE, sits and watches him. Stage-centre, a young girl, barely recognizable as anything but a swaddled assortment of cast-off clothing, sits, a cottage cheese container in front of her to collect change. This is BUNDLE. Down-stage left, a girl plays percussion on an overturned shortening bucket, while her male comrade strums a guitar. They are NETTIE BUNT and BOB NOZZLE, hard-working minstrels of the inner city. They are tuning up as the play begins (as much as you can tune up a shortening bucket!)

Suddenly a space high above the stage lights up. It is the radio broadcast booth of X-MACHINA, who hovers high above the streets like a cathedral gargoyle. He is just beginning his shift.

X-MACHINA: (Talking into the mike.) Night rolls in, and the spectres of the workaday world drift away, leaving the damned, the damaged, and the pure. As I look down, I see them dancing in contortions. I see them rushing from judgment like a roach from a light-switch - and it is all just a moment, don't you see? It is all just a moment. It is a brief and bumpy ride. Another day disappears like a snake swallowing an egg. (Pause.) Here's a platter to the things that matter brought to you with love by your guy in the sky, X-Machina. (Plays music, mellow and moody.)

Down below, the FALCON LADY enters, carrying a lawn chair. She is dressed in a slicker and rain-hat, and wears binoculars around her neck. She sets up her chair with her back to the audience. As soon as she's seated, her gaze turns skyward.

FALCON LADY: Hello babies...

Enter BAD GUY (pronounced "Gee"). He wears the rattiest leather jacket imaginable. He stops beside the Falcon Lady and looks up to see what she's looking at.

BAD GUY: Birds, eh? (No response. Louder.) Birds, eh? (No response.) I see you here all the time looking at the sky and, if you ask me, you are troubled. I think maybe some night she will bring two chairs. (Pause.) Those birds are going to die. (She gasps.) They are going to splatter at your feet like a bomb made of yams. (Pause.) You are a flaky bitch. (She shivers as Guy walks over to BUNT and NOZZLE.)

NOZZLE: Oh come on, man, leave us alone.

BAD GUY: I want to play you something. It's a folk song from Quebec.

NOZZLE: You can't be hanging around here. You totally ruin the show.

NETTIE: We didn't have enough money to eat today because of you.

BAD GUY: (Lights up, as Bob reluctantly hands him the guitar.) I got something for you to eat, eh? Eh? (Strums. He doesn't know how to play a single chord.) "My two black beef, my two black beef, I would rather my wife pass away than my two black beef."

NOZZLE: (Taking his guitar back.) That's beautiful, man.

BAD GUY: Everything in Quebec is ten times better than here. If they saw you in Quebec, they would arrest you and make you clean a park.

NETTIE: Please, just go away.

BAD GUY: Sing some Robert Charlebois.

NOZZLE: Who's he?

BAD GUY: You don't know? Really? (Pause.) You don't know? (Pause.) You really don't know? (

Pause.) You really don't know?

NETTIE: Just piss off, will you!

BAD GUY: (Smiles.) Your lady, Bob Nozzle - she is a princess. So dainty. So soft-spoken. (Sings as he exits.) "I would rather my wife pass away than my two black beef..."

SHIFT: COFFEE SHOP

BERTRAND: (to the ever-attentive Hoagie.) So Olivier and Danny Kaye are in this hotel in Surrey and they've really got a bone going - I mean a real, hot sweaty mess with their legs up in the air kicking - and then Olivier says something catty, you know, makes a crack, takes the edge off the bone. Completely depletes the bone. So Kaye untangles himself, and puts his robe on, and is sitting there acting all hurt, and Larry's like: "Hey, if you can't take a joke, I'll just out and find another bang boy," and then he kind of grumbles to himself and then he goes to sleep. So he's just lying there with his big knightly sceptre dangling and Kaye's steamed, right? So he goes down to the lobby and there's some stragglers there and they're all like, "Hey, it's Danny Kaye!" So he invites them back to the room, right, and some of them have cameras. So somewhere out there are multiple black and white studies of Laurence Olivier's flaccid dick. How about that, Hoagie! You learned something new today!

PENNY DREADFUL, an old, shuffling bag lady, has just entered Hopper's. Hey, get out of here, you old jawa! There's nothing here for you!

PENNY: You got any coffee you're gonna throw out?

BERTRAND: Yep. Wanna watch me? I'm just about to junk the Snickerdoodle.

PENNY: Can I have some for me and that girl out there? We're cold.

BERTRAND: (After several seconds of nodding his head "yes") No. Quit blocking my doorway, you economically challenged old sponge! Are there no workhouses?

PENNY: (Exiting.) The Lord will punish you.

BERTRAND: (Yells after her.) This coffee shop will not compromise its allegiance to our one Horned god! How about that, huh, Hoagie? Sticking it to the needy. (With relish.) Sticking it to the needy.

PENNY: (Walks over to BUNDLE and sits beside her.) I couldn't get any.

Enter SOLOMON SHREEMORE & EDDIE AMIN, festival planners. They are always in a frenzy of hyper-kinetic activity. AMIN delivers all his lines into his cell phone.

SHREEMORE: Hmmm...there appears to be some poor folks here. They'll have to be moved. (Looks around and points.) Knock that down, move that, that can stay. This is all gonna have to be blocked off to cars. (Consults his day planner.) Okay, Friday morning is pancakes and prayers and then the big kick-off. We've got a hip wader relay at nine and a kayak race at nine-thirty - chili cook-offs at noon - and face painting. I don't want to see a single kid in a three block radius doesn't look like a fucking animal.

AMIN: I don't care...no, he don't care either...neither of us care, and we don't want any excuses...neither of us want any excuses and neither of us care...yeah, he's here. There's no use talking to him 'cause I'm telling you he don't care...he's got a right to know, Ganch. We've got open channels of communication here, but you've only been with us, what eight years now, so maybe you haven't heard...yes, I can, Ganch. I can talk to you like that. Just admit it, you're error prone; you're sloppy; you let the cows get out of the gate...yeah, well, so what? My grandmother's worse than sick. Ganch.

My grandmother's dead. You don't hear me whining about it.

SHREEMORE: (Looking out at the audience, a gleam in his eye.) It's been in the wrong hands too long. The waters of progressive thinking will wash it clean. They will all come, and they will all park, and they will all shop. They will all come to our festival. They will all come to Slush-Fest. (Exits.)

AMIN: Yeah, he's talking to someone, but I don't know who. He's a visionary, he's allowed to do that...God, Ganch, what are you fucking remedial? We're you in a special class? (Notices Shreemore's absence.) Shit, he's gone! Run with me, Ganch!

PENNY: (To Bundle, gesturing after the departed festival planners.) Something's happening but I don't know what. Might be a lot of people coming here. (Pause.) When you eat last?

BUNDLE: I'm okay, Penny. I don't hardly get hungry.

PENNY: Them bastards were just gonna throw out that coffee. It was the last of the pot.

BUNDLE: It don't matter.

PENNY: (Looking off to the far left and crossing herself.) Here comes some sin.

Enter CARLA KNOWLEDGE and BRING'EM YOUNG, engaged in heated discussion. BRING'EM wears spectacles and a subdued three-piece suit. CARLA wears what you'd expect, considering her line of work.

CARLA: I don't know why you're so mad.

BRING'EM: I'm not mad. I'm just concerned. We have to offer a wide range of services to stay competitive. You can't start getting fussy on me.

CARLA: He's sick - Bring'Em - I've never heard of anybody doing that!

BRING'EM: What's the big deal? Just don't get it in your ears.

CARLA: This is a problem. This is a real problem. You're not very sensitive to my concerns.

BRING'EM: Come on, Carla - it's just role-playing. These influential guys never want it straight up. Their wives can give them that.

CARLA: Well, I got my standards.

BRING-EM: If you're not careful you're going to end up squatting on the curb with Old Yuck and Young Yuck over there. That's what would happen if I cut you loose. You could pool your twenty live brain cells together and hold a symposium on outdoor living. Probably you'd end up blue and stiff on some inadequate sidewalk heat-vent. (Pause.) And that's not good.

CARLA: You're a cruel man, Bring-Em. (Exits.)

BRING'EM: I'd call it a disinclination towards tenderness. (Follows her.)

PENNY: (To Bundle.) You get anything nice in your bucket today?

BUNDLE: I didn't really try too much. (Nods after Carla.) That lady's nice to me sometimes.

PENNY: Ah, you don't want to be seen around her. She's a wicked soul. (We hear the creaking of wheels and the sound of grunting and pushing.) Hey, here comes Hot Dog Dick. Maybe he can spot you a bun and mustard - fill that nagging belly of yours. (Dick enters guiding his cart to its place of mooring as his assistant, JEREMY BREWER, pushes from behind.) Evening, Dick. That's a real nice cooking cart you got there. It looks better since you got that new paint. Don't look like too many people out tonight, Dick. Hope you get some business.

DICK: Can I ask you to shove over? (They do. Dick parks the cart.) Tuesday night - I'll be lucky to make anything. Still, what's the point of staying idle?

PENNY: You brought your fellow there with you.

DICK: That's Brewer. I'm pretty sure I introduced you.

PENNY: Oh yeah, I seen him before. (Pause.) You got anything for Bundle?

DICK: (Fiddling with the brakes on his cart.) Bag of buns - little past fresh. (He finds the bag and tosses it over to Bundle.)

BUNDLE: Thanks, Dick. These'll be good. (Opens bag and begins to munch on one.)

DICK: Brewer come up with an idea about smells. He figures we can rig up something to send out the smell of the dogs a long way - just like when you can smell the hops from over at the brewery, or like when you drive by the Colonel's. He's reading some magazines about how to do it.

PENNY: That sounds real smart.

DICK: Smells are heavier than air, or lighter, I can't remember - anyway, they travel.

PENNY: (Points stage-right.) I can smell your dogs from over there sometimes.

DICK: Well, we got bigger plans than that. We want to get all the bankers up there in the office tower smelling them.

X-MACHINA: (Opens his window and leans out, speaking into a megaphone.) Hot Dog Dick, you got to shoot me up a weenie. I am hungry, Hot Dog Dick! Send me up a free dog and I'll give you a plug. That is a fair exchange. Wave your arms in the air if you comply with the terms! (Dick waves. The others stare up.)

DICK: He does the night show. (Begins to put weenies on the grill.)

X-MACHINA: (Into the mike.) I'd like to send a shout out to my main man meal ticket four hundred feet below - Hot Dog Dick - with tubesteaks better than your momma's milk, better than your first kiss - if

the devil comes bargaining for your soul, make sure you trade it for a Dick dog and roll - and you'll have trumped the archfiend, I guarantee. Well, it's ten o'clock in the core and I can see the last little sliver of sunset giving me a goodnight wink. Everything's in its place and all is well under heaven's starry awning. Just a calm, quiet, ordinary night...

SONG: CALM, ORDINARY NIGHT

PENNY: There's no reason to cry on a calm, ordinary night
There's no reason to cry on a quiet, ordinary night
Is it Monday? Is it Tuesday? Is this a Wednesday night?
Is it happy? Is it crappy? Or does it feel just right?
As I wait, and wait, for sleep to find me.

BUNDLE: There's no reason to kindle hope on a calm, ordinary night
There's no reason to dwindle hope on a quiet, ordinary night
Am I well? Can I tell? Is there any way of knowing?
Am I fed? Am I dead? What can I do when it starts snowing?
But just wait, and wait, for sleep to find me.

DICK: There's no reason to frown on a calm, ordinary night
No smiles turned upside down on a quiet, ordinary night
Will they smell what I sell? Will I earn my money?
Is it fresh piggy flesh, or is it smelling funny?
As I wait, and wait, for my customers to find me.

BREWER pops up from behind the cart, goes through the motions of preparing to sing a verse, but then disappears again.

FALCON LADY: There's no reason to go back home on a calm, ordinary night
There's no reason to be alone on a quiet, ordinary night
Am I blessed? Or obsessed? And why ask why?
Will I bide till they glide on the seas of the sky
As I wait, and wait, for an angel to find me.

NETTIE: There's no reason to rush away on a calm, ordinary night
There's no reason to hush away a quiet, ordinary night
Am I sullen? Am I fallen? What keeps me trying?
To appease them or to seize them or to keep them from dying
As I wait, and wait, for a change to find me.

ALL: There's no reason to cry on a calm, ordinary night
There's no reason to cry on a quiet, ordinary night
Is it beauty? Is it duty? That keeps me living
When I see my destiny will it be forgiving?
As I wait, and wait for sleep to find me
As I wait, and wait for sleep to find me...

SHIFT: Far Downstage Right

BAD GUY and BRING'EM are talking.

BRING'EM: She doesn't understand. I'm just trying to help her realize her potential.

BAD GUY: I know. Too bad you are in the bitch trade.

BRING'EM: I wasn't always, you know. (Pause.) I was asked to leave my previous post.

BAD GUY: Aw, being fired, it is nothing. I just laugh at it.

BRING'EM: Well, I really liked this job. I was teaching an introduction to Claude Levi-Strauss.

BAD GUY: What is there to learn about blue jeans?

BRING'EM: I had the opportunity to speak to people who were interested in what I had to say. I would give them assignments and then I would grade those assignments. Sometimes we'd all go for a beer together.

BAD GUY: But it all turned to shit, huh?

BRING'EM: It was a project. They didn't understand that. The whore as goddess. It was fucking Salem. It was fucking Salem plus Pontius Pilate plus the Grand Inquisition plus Joe McCarthy all rolled up into a ball and topped off with a Stalinist purge.

BAD GUY: I hear you, man.

BRING'EM: Do you, Guy? Do you really?

BAD GUY: This world is designed to put a hot, boiling nail right into your eye.

BRING'EM: I won't argue with that.

BAD GUY: And then you have to eat that eye and you see that you are rotten inside - and that it is rotten both in you and out of you.

BRING'EM: (Admiringly.) You're a poet.

BAD GUY: Me? I'm a fuck.

SHIFT: HOT DOG STAND

DICK hands BREWER a steaming hot weenie with all the fixings.

DICK: Here, Brewer. You take this up to that Mackinaw.

PENNY has taken her hat off and is exploring inside of it. Her fingers withdraw a small, ornate broach. You keep that in your hat? Doesn't it hurt your scalp?

PENNY: Least I know it's still there.

DICK: Do you sleep with it in there?

PENNY: Oh yeah, that's when there's the most danger of somebody snatching it. (To Bundle.) You've seen my little treasure, haven't you, Bundle? Many a time, I been tempted to sell it and get myself a real bed, a real bath, a real sit-down dinner. See how you can look into it. There's like a whole little world in it. It's all kind of murky, but there's things to look at in there. Mark on the back proves it's gold. I've had this pretty near forever. It was all my mother had to give me when I got in trouble and had to leave. I always have to be pulling it out and looking at it, like some people do a watch.

BUNDLE: There's a little gold forest in there - and some dancers.

DICK: You should get that onto the Antiques Roadshow. There's a British guy would quote you a figure - a big one, too, I'm betting.

PENNY: Naw, I need to hold onto it - for when my health goes. I got a man interested in buying it. He knows what it's worth. But it's for when I can't get around no more. That's when I'm gonna cash it in - put myself in a nice, restful place. (She pops it back into her hat which she puts back onto her head.)

DICK: I don't have nothing nice like that. Everything my family had was made out of plastic and pretty much just wore itself out. (Pause.) I hope Brewer comes right back. I need him to chop some tomatoes. It hurts my hands.

PENNY: That's his name? Just Brewer?

DICK: Jeremy Brewer - but he don't even really need a name because he don't even react when you say it. (Gazes up.) Look at that moon. It looks like a nice, fresh sponge cake. (They all look to the sky.)

BREWER has entered X-MACHINA's booth. They are staring at each other.

X-MACHINA: (After a moment.) Shake my hand. (BREWER shakes it.) Now pass me that pup. (Hands him the bag.) Man, my belly was whining like a welfare mother. (Digs in. BREWER turns to leave.) Hey, wait! Come back here. (He stops.) What's your name, man?

BREWER: Jeremy Brewer.

X-MACHINA: What's the deal on you? You work for Hot Dog Dick?

BREWER: (Pause.) We're in business together.

X-MACHINA: Well, I want you to tell him something. I want you to tell him his dogs fill up my senses. Tell him it's manna shaped like a banana. Tell him it's better than a blow from Monroe, and my only complaint is that they're ain't three.

BREWER: He makes them himself - in potentially unsanitary conditions.

X-MACHINA: (His mouth full and happy.) Mmm...by its very nature, the hot dog is a union of meats. No use having any illusions about it - it's gonna be more groin than sirloin every time.

BREWER: He paints furniture at the same time that he makes them.

X-MACHINA: Man, are you disgruntled? Dick not pay you enough.

BREWER: I'm just helping him for now.

X-MACHINA: Well, no more digs at the merchandise, Jeremy Brewer. Don't be berating what I am masticating. (Leans forward.) Here, introduce the next song for me.

X-MACHINA presses a button. BREWER stares at him. X-MACHINA points to the mike.

BREWER: This is the next song. (He hurries off. Music plays.)

X-MACHINA: (Goes to the window with his megaphone.) Hot Dog Dick, you are a fine purveyor of meats, but your staff is de-ranged! (Sees the FALCON LADY.) Hey, lady, how are your wind chickens? I sure hope they don't do the Dumpty drop on ya! They're right outside my window here. I can see their little beaks working. I think they've packed it in for the night. Hey, I'll tell you what. I'll try to work "Fly Like An Eagle" into my next rotation - the Neville Brothers one, not the Steve Miller one.

The FALCON LADY drops her binoculars, folds up her lawn chair, and exits.

SHIFT: BOB NOZZLE & NETTIE BUNT

NOZZLE: You don't think he's an avatar?

NETTIE: He can't be. Physical beauty is part of it.

NOZZLE: If he'd just trim those burns, he'd have it.

NETTIE: Neil Young is not an avatar. Remember, you've already had to eat crow once this week. Bob Dylan was in "Pat Garrett", not "Butch Cassidy." (Quotes in Dylan drawl.) "Quality beans...succotash."

NOZZLE:(Pause.) Do you love me?

NETTIE: I do.

NOZZLE: Then you know it doesn't matter if my head's all full of straw.

NETTIE: Write that down - that's good. That's like prime Jim Croce.

NOZZLE: Someday, baby - someday I'm gonna buy you the biggest shortening tub on the planet. I've even gonna buy it new and make them take the shortening out of it. And then I'm gonna buy you a van with beaded curtains on the back windshield.

NETTIE: You're gonna make it big, Bobbie. You're gonna get discovered.

NOZZLE:And we can say we had to start out here.

NETTIE: And it'll all be that much sweeter because of it.

NOZZLE: I'm gonna buy you your own organic goat - and someday I'm gonna meet up with Neil Young, and he'll be really, really old, but he'll have heard of me - and we're gonna go motorbike riding.

NETTIE:I'll follow in the van - with the beaded curtains.

NOZZLE: And the goat.

NETTIE: And the world's biggest shortening tub.

NOZZLE: (Almost teary with the vision.) Beautiful.

SHIFT: HOPPER'S COFFEE SHOP

BERTRAND: James Dean - now he was whacked. He used to get his rocks off by having other men put out their cigarettes on him - and Charles Laughton, well, you remember that big stone disc he was chained to in Hunchback of Notre Dame? Well, one day the crew shows up after lunch break, and they flip the sound-stage lights on, and there's Laughton bent over the best boy grip - giving it to him right there on

the stone - and Laughton doesn't even miss a beat, right: he takes his sweet time to finish, and then he gives the grip kind of a loving pat on the back, and then he draws himself up to his full height and bellows out: "Alright, I'm ready for my hump!" How about that, huh! I better go see if we're getting low on hazelnut syrup. (Exits briefly. When he's gone, FUNKY CUSTOMER enters. Hoagie's eyes immediately extend into wide orbs. Bertrand returns.) What, Hoagie, your thyroid bothering you again?(HOAGIE points. FUNKY has now taken out a large drawing pad and a case of pencil crayons with which he begins to sketch.) Oh my God - that's Robert Crumb! (They take some time to commence any kind of reaction. Finally, Bertrand walks over.) Excuse me, I just wanted to say that I'm a huge fan.I'd like to make you one of my famous Russocinnos, on the house.

FUNKY: Russocino - what's that?

BERTRAND: That's my name - Bertrand Russo - I named it after myself. You'll like it. What are you drawing? Some cats with tits?

FUNKY: No, I was just about to draw this sugar dispenser. Glass is a challenging subject because of the way the light plays off it.

BERTRAND: Is it going to have tits?

FUNKY: Uh...I was just going to draw it more or less as it is. Did you say you were going to Make one of those drinks for me for free?

BERTRAND: It would be an honour. (Points to paper.) If you want, you can let me have that when you're done. I'll put it up on the wall.

FUNKY: Uh...all right. I'm not sure it's going as well as I wanted it to.

BERTRAND: That's my friend Hoagie. We saw your movie. We thought that was really neat that your brother could floss his ass.

FUNKY: (Gathering up his stuff to leave.) I'm sorry...you're confusing me.

BERTRAND: No, don't go, man. Wait! At least sign this. (He hands him a napkin. FUNKY CUSTOMER squiggles a signature. Bertrand examines it.) Ah, man, you did it too fast. They won't be able to tell it's yours. (He is out the door.) Hey, I was gonna make a Russocino for you, Crumb! No wonder women hate you! Can you believe he was here, Hoagie? Hey, get the tape! We gotta make sure nobody else sits on this stool. Crumb's bum was here. (Bertrand scrambles around for tape. Enter the FALCON LADY.) Hey, don't sit there! (The FALCON LADY unfolds her lawnchair and sits beside Hoagie. They make eye contact.He nods; she nods.)

SHIFT: A spotlight appears far stage-left. CARLA walks into it and it follows her.

SONG: FLAVOURS

I have seen the flavours of all kinds of men
I've been asked for favours by all kinds of men
But they all left me...unhappy.

I have seen the outer rust of all kinds of men
I have seen the inner dust of all kinds of men
But they all left me...unhappy.

I have heard the change rattle in all kinds of men
I have rode in side-saddle for all kinds of men
But they all left me...unhappy.

I have smelt the tomcat scent in all kinds of men
I have smelt the poison pent up in all men
But it all left me...unhappy.

I have tasted all the parts of all kinds of men
I have tasted all the hearts of all kinds of men
But they all left me...unhappy.

I have felt the water wash away all kinds of men
Round and round the drain they glide away, all kinds of men
But it still leaves me...unhappy.

Enter BUNDLE.

BUNDLE:I like it how you sing to yourself when no one else is around.

CARLA: You're around. Where's that old Baba Yaga of yours? Building a gingerbread house?

BUNDLE:Looking at her broach. You ask Bring'Em about me?

CARLA: It's no use, Bundle. He's not interested.

BUNDLE:I could clean myself up.

CARLA: You don't have the shape for it. You're like a little bone. Mmm, that reminds me.I was going to bring you an orange. They're on special this week.

BUNDLE: You know those bits of crayon I got in my Sucrets box. I drew a picture of myself in a dress and make-up.

CARLA: You don't want to be like me, Bundle. It's really unnatural sometimes.

BUNDLE:I do. I do wanna be like you.

CARLA: Why? So you can be property? You give up a hell of a lot to do this - if he wasn't talking to that Frenchman, he'd be dogging me right now. At least, you can come and go as you please. Why don't you turn yourself in to some kind of agency? They'd help you.

BUNDLE:I've had guys have a go at me. I liked it.

CARLA: Whatever you do, don't you go talking about this to Bring 'Em. He doesn't like nobody who can't stand up to him. Little, grubby-faced girl coming up to him wouldn't sit well. He thinks he's a fancy man. Good chance he'd do something to you - I wouldn't put it past him.

BUNDLE: But did you even ask him for me?

CARLA: (Walking away.) No!

BUNDLE: But you said you would. (Follows her off-stage.)

SHIFT: HOT DOG STAND

SHREEMORE and AMIN are wolfing down weenies, AMIN one-handed because of the cell phone.

SHREEMORE: See, look at this guy. This is a guy with ambition. Tuesday night and not a soul in sight, saving a couple members of the Pretty City Committee working late. Maybe if all the merchants down here tried this hard, this place wouldn't be a goddamned necropolis. Check him out - he's like an old-fashioned Mr. Shopsy, you know, he just needs an apron and a pickle barrel. I'm going to make sure he gets a booth at the Slush-Fest, just see if I don't. Man, this dog's got moxy! It transcends its own limits.

AMIN: Mmm, boy...Ganch, you wouldn't believe how good this is...Yeah, well, I'm not going to tell you because you wouldn't believe it...it's all red and juicy...yeah, well, why haven't you eaten, Ganch? It's because you haven't learned to manage your time.

SHREEMORE: (Introducing himself to Dick.) Hot Dog Dick, that you? (Dick nods.) Well, I just want to tell you I think you've really got it together. (Extends hand.) Name's Shreemore. (They shake.) I'm a festival planner. You ever work festivals?

DICK: (Shrugs.) I just stay here.

SHREEMORE: Well, guess what - you don't have to move because a festival's gonna come to you.

Right here on this stop. The Slush-Fest Spring Thaw Celebration. Eddie over there's my assistant. I brought him down to get a visual. We're gonna have a food glade. How'd you like to be part of a food glade, Hot Dog Dick?

DICK: I don't know what that is.

AMIN: What? Well right now he's chatting the guy up...we're making connections, Ganch...sure it counts

as work. Look, I was supposed to be at Parent / Teacher night... Yeah, well I figure if the little dummy fucked up bad enough, I'll get him a tutor.

SHREEMORE: Every restaurant owner in the city's clamouring to get in: Sneaky Pita, Juice Weasel, Hot Ham Rockets, and four different souvlaki stands. Look, you got a card? (Dick shakes his head.)

AMIN: I knew it from the time he was a baby. You'd shake something in front of him and he'd just stare at it. He wouldn't reach out for it or nothing... Yeah, well, I can't take him back. I lost the receipt. (Laughs.) I knew I shouldn't have given the wife a poke that night. Yeah, Ganch, well someday you'll have to deal with it, too, soon as you can figure out how your equipment works...yeah, well, at least you're inside where it's warm...I don't know. I think he wants to get some measurements.

DICK: Excuse me - Slush-Fest? What is a Slush-Fest?

SHREEMORE: (Smiles.) Well, now, I'm glad you asked.

SONG: SLUSH-FEST WILL SAVE US

There's a picture on my desk of this block in 1950
The shops have velvet awnings and the shoppers all look nifty
As they fill the streets to overflowing,
Where, oh where, do you think they're going?

There are butchers, tailors, barbers, and greengrocers
There are no boarded windows and no foreclosures
And the civic fathers' clarity
Feeds the general prosperity.

If we turn back time, can we get back this magic?
Instead of tow trucks and street kids, that's tragic.
We take our stand in the slush
And prepare for the imminent rush.

Slush-Fest will bring good fortune to the region
Slush-Fest will bring the people back in legion
Slush-Fest will bring us renown
And white elephants aren't welcome in town.

AMIN: (Sings into phone.) Ganch, you know I respect his vision
He perseveres through all derision
He'll save this place sure as Christ is risen
If you believe in that sort of thing.

BOTH: Slush-Fest will bring good fortune to the region
Slush-Fest will bring the people back in legion
Slush-Fest will bring us renown
And white elephants aren't welcome in town.

DICK: (Pause.) Yeah, that sounds like a pretty good time.

SHREEMORE: (Reaches into his jacket pocket.) Let me get you an application.

SHIFT: BAD GUY holding a sobbing BRING'EM.

BAD GUY: Easy, man, easy.

BRING'EM: It was only supposed to be a project. They made me in this - why aren't they able to separate a man from the work he does? There are dark forces in control, Guy. Forces that pervert our purest

ambitions.

BAD GUY: I can't stand what they've done to you. Those fucks - I hope they get colon cancer.

BRING'EM: The worst thing is having to pretend, but I can't stop now. Without this, I'll have no self-respect at all - but, it's just that, nobody's gonna publish it. It's so doubtful whether any good will come out of this. (Sobs.) Galileo be damned! They'll still quash a genius - anybody who rocks their stodgy little faculties!

BAD GUY: They are garbage-eating vipers. We will pirouette on their graves someday. (BERTRAND is watching them from the coffee shop window.) Hey! Mind your business, or your window might get broke!

SHIFT: HOPPER'S COFFEE SHOP

BERTRAND: The crazy Frenchman is dancing with the pimp. Must mean it'll rain. (HOAGIE smiles shyly at the FALCON LADY. She stares straight out into space. Hoagie gets up and gestures to the coffee pot on the burner. She looks at him and nods. He pours her a cup which he sets before her.) So Hoagie, Joan Crawford asked Marilyn Monroe if she could eat out her muff, but Marilyn said - (Turns around and notices what's happened.) Oh, oh, I'm sorry -

SHIFT: CARLA and BUNDLE walk to stage-centre where they converse awhile.

CARLA: So Bring'Em's got this fascination with thresholds. He gives me an out, though. I can always yell when I've had enough, but it's - I don't know - it's almost like I want to challenge myself. Bring'Em says I should think of myself as an artist. I mean, I've got ground rules: no animals, no high school boys, and nobody over seventy. I check I.D. and everything. Mostly it's just unbearably boring, so it's not that I don't appreciate a good kink, but shit? Naw, you got to draw the line at shit. Mama did raise me to be nobody's commode.

BUNDLE: How much were they gonna pay you?

CARLA: Come on, Bundle, that hardly matters. This hotty ain't no potty.

BUNDLE: Well, maybe that's something I could do.

CARLA: (Takes a close look at her.) You worry me, you know that. You've got Jane Doe written all over you. You don't start taking care of yourself, you gonna end up dead. How old are you? Seventeen? Eighteen? Ain't nobody in the whole history of the world ever gone around looking to get shit on. Geez, Bundle, don't you have nothing going on in that head of yours? (With tenderness.) Hey, I bet that river's warm tonight. Remember you said you were looking to get some of that grime off you? (Reaches into her handbag.) Here, every time I go to a motel, I steal some of their shampoo. We can wash you up real nice. I bet it we take that layer of topsoil of you, you'll look a lot prettier.

BUNDLE: That river's polluted.

CARLA: Not enough to kill you. Come on, we'll wade out a little. (They exit.)

SHIFT: PENNY DREADFUL talking to BREWER.

PENNY: You must know him better than anyone.

BREWER: I wouldn't say that. (Pause.) A man who sells hot dogs is automatically not that important.

PENNY: Dick adds a lot to this block. His dog's are good and he's good. Sometimes the things you say about Dick are not so kind.

BREWER: Do you have any children?

PENNY: (Taken aback.) No.

BREWER: Good. You'd ruin their lives.

PENNY: (Pause. A sinister undertone.) If you think I don't know your story, you're wrong. There's not much I don't hear about sooner or later. (He fixates her with his stare.) And you can wipe that look off your face because it's not intimidating no one! If you think I don't know what you're feeling, you're wrong. My whole life I been treated the same way.

BREWER: Did Dick tell you? He doesn't know as much as he thinks he does.

PENNY: He gave you a chance - and you don't even appreciate it.

BREWER: So you know? Are you happy that you know? Do you think that gives you some sort of power over me?

PENNY: I just thought you might be happy if you didn't have to pretend.

BREWER: Ha! What? I'm to come to you for solace now? You're a non-person.

PENNY: Oh, I got a lot more person in me than you do, Jeremy Brewer. Ain't nothing wrong with my head.

BREWER: If you only realized the risk that you're taking...

PENNY: You don't unsettle me! Look at you, wide-eyed like an animal in a hole, you're the one who's scared!

BREWER: (One syllable at a time as he inches away from her.) I wish you a pleasant evening.

PENNY: I told you! There's not much I don't hear about!

SHIFT: X-MACHINA'S BROADCAST BOOTH

X-MACHINA: It's just shy of midnight in the stew-kettle of a summer's night, and I am looking down into a pool of light. Cars glide by like incandescent slugs. I am high above the city, locked in tight, little security man down in the lobby to keep the bad folks out. My voice slides out like tendrils of creeper vine. I am speaking to the best and the worst, the holy and the unholy. I am speaking into a hospital waiting room. Hi, you have my prayers. I may be speaking into a room where a man is trying to tie a noose. Hi, think of those that love you and will miss you. I may be speaking into a car radio as it plunges below the water line. I speak into rooms where couples make love, couples that like each other and couples that don't. I speak into all-night grocery stores where shelves are being stacked. I speak to people who have just crossed over into sleep, forgetting to turn me off. I speak to the night clerk counting keys. I speak to the criminal. I speak to the soft-soled night nurse. I am your secret companion -disembodied. I ride the wind, but I am no ghost. I am real. There is a real person where the string joins onto the tin can. I feel. I am flesh. I could stop talking. (He does. A beat.) I could become silent. (Picks up the bag Brewer brought him.) Earlier on I was enjoying a Hot Dog Dick dog. I still have the tail end of it here. I could choke on it. I could become the victim of full windpipe blockage. Stranger tales have been told. But that's not gonna happen, if I chew every bite ten times - (Suddenly he holds his throat and begins to gag. After a brief, fitful struggle, he flops across the console board. The phone rings. He raises his head with a smile.) Ah, you are listening.

SHIFT: BAD GUY and BRING'EM sitting on the curb. BRING'EM wipes his eyes.

BRING'EM: Well, that was embarrassing.

BAD GUY:It's nothing.

BRING'EM: But cathartic.

BAD GUY:Cathartic?

BRING'EM: Cleansing. (Pause.) You're a good listener.

BAD GUY:Me, I am the number one listener.

BRING'EM: You're something of an enigma, aren't you?

BAD GUY:Why you call me that, you stupid pimp? After I let you cry all over me. I was just hoping you'd give me Carla for Jean de Baptiste day.

BRING'EM: I mean, I shared something with you - but you, you're opaque. What is it you do anyway? Do you do anything?

BAD GUY: Oh yeah, oh yeah, sure.

BRING'EM: What?

BAD GUY: I'm a demon.

BRING'EM: Well, we've all got a dark side.

BAD GUY:No, man, I'm serious. I'm a soul collector. I tell you because you're already money in the bank. It's that bird lady I want. I got to trip her up.

BRING'EM: So this isn't just some elaborate metaphor?

BAD GUY:No way. I been thrust out of grace.

BRING'EM: Where's your horns?

BAD GUY:Where's your lime green fedora?

BRING'EM Good point. (Gets up.) Anyway, I want to talk about this further, but you got to leave it

with me for awhile. (Exits.)

SONG: DOWNTOWN DEMON'S RESUME

Globs of curdled purity and souls you've led astray
And that's a downtown demon's resume

I bashed in Leon Trotsky with an ice axe
- but that's no reflection on me!
A smack made Charlie Parker blow his last sax
- but that's no reflection on me!
I was stationed in Bolivia when we shot Che
but that's no reflection on me, no way!

Globs of curdled purity and souls you've led astray
And that's a downtown demon's resume

I sold Lee Harvey schoolbooks on deposit
- but that's no reflection on me!
I told Ernest Roehm to leave the closet
- but that's no reflection on me!
I slandered all the lawyers with my good friend Stockwell Day
but that's no reflection on me, no way!

The babies bob like ice cubes after sinking
- but that's no reflection on me!
As Judas to the legionnaire was finking
- but that's no reflection on me!
And, aside from that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?
Still it's no reflection on me, no way!

I whisper into every ear, there's no escaping me
I live inside each molecule and scale each banzai tree
And if you wonder who I am, it's plain for all to see
I am the tempter second class who calls himself Bad Guy!

Yes, Bad Guy is my name. I have no mother. I was willed into being out of
everybody's dirty thoughts. Just like the maggot will emerge spontaneously
from the rotted half-peach, so the decrepitude of the inner city cannot help but
pucker the earth itself so that it spits out the dark spore that will rupture like a
fart bubble in a bathtub, producing the great abomination, the devastatingly
inevitable - the Bad Guy!

Enter SHREEMORE and AMIN. GUY holds out his hand.
Change?

SHREEMORE: No thanks, I'm pretty happy the way I am. (Exits.)

AMIN: Ha, Ganch, you should have seen it. Shreemore just one-lined this scuz...

BAD GUY: (To Amin.) How about you? Help a guy out.

AMIN: Hey, Ganch, the scuz is trying to hit me up now. (To Guy.) No way, scuz! You'll
spend it on crack and Lottario. Why don't you go down to the railway tracks and drink something that'll kill

you? (Starts to leave.) Ganch, don't you get to laughing. You'll get me laughing too. You know I can't help it...Yeah, it has been a long night, hasn't it? (Guy touches his back with two outstretched fingers.) Hey, don't touch me, scuz. This jacket is worth more than your upkeep for the next twenty-five years.

BAD GUY: (Holds up the two outstretched fingers.) You will die tonight. (Bows and leaves.)

AMIN: Ganch, that scuz just hexed me, or something. He just pulled some Monkey's Paw bullshit on me. Stinking crazy scuz! That's your tax dollars at work, Ganch, right there! Mister Harris should come right down here, give that guy a drug test, and put him on a chain gang! (Exits.)

SHIFT: HOPPER'S COFFEE SHOP

BERTRAND is sweeping up. His style is noticeably restrained in the presence of budding romance.

BERTRAND: So, anyway, it seems...uh...it seems, well, Judy Garland would have been around sixteen at the time, and those munchkins, well, at one point they kind of swarmed her so they never could find out whose hand it was - I'm thinking maybe the Lollipop Guild guy, the one with the cowlick...but, you know...I hope this stuff is interesting to you. Uh, when Hitler was a baby only one of his testicles dropped - (CARLA and BUNDLE enter, dripping wet from the river.) Hey! My floor!

CARLA: That water's freezing! We need to use your bathroom.

BERTRAND: We're closed.

CARLA: Give us a break! Maybe I'll pump your little peter on a layaway plan. (They giggle and run off to the john.)

BERTRAND: (Excited.) You hear that, Hoagie? She wants me.

SHIFT: BOB NOZZLE and NETTIE BUNT

NETTIE: According to the Celts, when you see a star fall, you should wipe your pimples with a cloth, because your pimples will disappear as quickly as the star disappeared - but you shouldn't wipe them with your hand because otherwise you'll get them on your hand.

NOZZLE: Where do you get this stuff?

NETTIE: From the library. That's from The Golden Bough.

NOZZLE: I bet that old dead gas-ball was about a quadrillion years old.

NETTIE: Shhh...

NOZZLE: What?

NETTIE: Silence. No drunks. No ambulances. No street cleaners. (Pause.) I wish you were a Viking.

NOZZLE: Man, it's just never good enough, is it? It's just never good enough.

NETTIE: Shhh...

NOZZLE: What?

NETTIE: I hear something. (In the distance, coming nearer, we can hear PENNY DREADFUL carrying on something awful. She caterwauls out a refrain of "My broach!" "My broach!")

PENNY: (Flies across the stage and is gone.) My broach! My broach! My broach! (They gaze off after her.)

NOZZLE: Hey.

NETTIE: What?

NOZZLE: Her broach.

SHIFT: HOT DOG STAND

DICK: (To Brewer.) And you are angry because of what?

BREWER: You told Penny about my time away.

DICK: What? Are we supposed to lie about it forever? It's just like you went to a regular hospital. Once you were sick; now you are recovered.

BREWER: She's gonna reproach me with it - she's gonna spread it all around.

DICK: Nobody believes anything she says anyway.

BREWER: (Pause.) You haven't painted my name on the cart.

DICK: I am waiting for our relationship to solidify.

BREWER: Dick and Brewer's Beefy Tubers.

DICK: I don't like that. It sounds too much like tumors.

BREWER: But it's perfect.

Enter PENNY DREADFUL in pure panic.

PENNY: My broach! Someone's taken my broach! I was squatting down to pee and someone snatched my cap right off my head! (BREWER is trying to suppress a giggle.) What? You think it's funny? I bet you're the one who took it; you're the one that's got the moon fever! Dick, make him stop laughing!

DICK: Brewer! Stop laughing! It's her broach. We have to help her find it. (BREWER is now laughing so hard, he collapses on the ground.) Brewer! You are acting crazy! Stop laughing!

BREWER: (Busting a gut.) It was all she had in the world! And it's gone in like a second! That's the funniest fucking thing I ever heard! (DICK and PENNY gather around him and scowl.)

ACT TWO: Lights up on X-MACHINA.

X-MACHINA: We are being pulled closer to morning. Soon, Mr. Sun will come up like a welt.

You know, I sometimes wish there were still milkmen - or paperboys that are boys, not fifty year old men. Driving their shiny red bikes and lobbing up that paper in a big, fat perfect arch. This is a lonely time of night. Even the CRTC's asleep at this time of night - big, nasty cock thrusting its way through expectant labia - see, I told you. Head bleeper's dozing at the wheel. I'm looking down at the orange roses of puke puddles. From up here it looks like the floor beneath the high chair of an infant Jackson Pollack. It looks like a leaky cardboard box full of yellowing obituaries. X-Machina always saves this cut for the lonely hour. (Music plays.)

Down below the FALCON LADY has brought out HOAGIE to her point of vigil. She points up. He nods. BRING'EM and CARLA brush past them, with BUNDLE lurking at a distance, looking fresh and pretty.

BRING'EM: I don't need to remind you that we're having a slow night.

CARLA: It's Tuesday, for God's sake!

BRING'EM: That doesn't mean anything. Tuesday's the best night of the week at the movies.

CARLA: So we're gonna go two-for-one, are we?

BRING'EM: No, no, no - look I was over there in the lobby of Executive Suites, and I think I got somebody who's interested - but he just wants to examine you.

CARLA: Examine me?

BRING 'EM: You know, like a doctor. Except he won't know what he's doing.

CARLA: (Shrugs.) That seems alright.

BRING 'EM: But there's one other thing.

CARLA: What?

BRING 'EM: His mom's gonna be there.

CARLA: God!

BRING 'EM: Not as a participant - but we're specialists, remember?

CARLA: (Walks away.) Well, if he's got any rings, he's gonna have to take them off.

BRING 'EM: Yeah, I guess this guy's not comfortable unless his mom's there. It's kind of different when you think about it. (BUNDLE is walking up to him.) What do you want?

BUNDLE: You're Bring'Em Young.

BRING 'EM: And you're that little urchin girl, aren't you? Looks like somebody hosed you down. Normally you look like one of those little bastards under the Ghost of Christmas Present's cloak.

BUNDLE: I don't know him. (Pause.) I made you something. (Hands him a crinkled piece of paper.) It's a resume.

BRING 'EM: First of all, it's not typed and, second of all, your spelling is atrocious. (Sounds out the words.) I like any kind of fuck. (Looks at her.) Open your mouth. (She does. He looks in.) God Almighty, they didn't clean in there. You are definitely in need of an oral care program. That must be some pretty thin soup over at the mission. You're built like a greyhound.

BUNDLE: No, I'm not - I'm not fat.

BRING'EM: The dog - not the bus! (He becomes increasingly more aggressive as he circles her.) You got

an ass like a knuckle. (He grabs her viciously.)

BUNDLE: Ow! Let go! You're hurting me!

BRING 'EM:(Drops his arms to his side and regains instant calm.) Well, my dear, that's it. You failed the audition. It's really too bad because I do have some clients with a taste for veal. Oh well, thanks anyway and, at the risk of cliché, don't give up your day job. (He tears up the paper and lets the scraps float earthward. Then he exits, leaving a desolate BUNDLE alone on stage. She drifts off as BREWER and DICK enter with flashlights.)

BREWER: (Still in a merry mood.) If I may broach the subject - (Laughing fit.)

DICK:Jesus, Brewer, you take delight in other people's suffering. That's a step backward for you. (Enter PENNY, who is so frantic in her search, that she immediately runs to a pile of garbage and begins to dig in it like a dog.) What colour is it, Penny? Is it like a pearl colour?

PENNY: (Points to Brewer.) Why's he helping? He's the one that took it!

BREWER: (Turns off his flashlight.) You don't want me to help? Alright, I won't.

DICK:Come on, Brewer, you can't blame her for being upset.

BREWER: Fact is every guttersnipe in town knows about that broach by virtue of her taking it out and goggling at it every five minutes. What we have here is an inevitable consequence of carelessness.

PENNY: (Throwing garbage aimlessly in the air.) I got nothing to live for now! I'm gonna step out in front of a car, see if I don't! (BREWER snickers.)

DICK: Don't fret, Penny. We're gonna find it and then I'm gonna lend you some money to get a safety deposit box. Hey, Brewer, turn on your light. (Brewer starts to flash his light on and off. During Penny's diatribe, he begins to shine it on her like a spotlight.)

PENNY: I'm telling you somebody pinched in right off my melon! They took a handful of hair with them, too! I'm gonna throw myself off an overpass and sink down underneath the wheels. I'm gonna jump into the river and let the carp get me! Think about that, Brewer, you horrible little loon, think of having that on your conscience! I'm telling you he's got it, Dick! Make him empty out his pockets!

BREWER: (Still happy.) Why would I want that unexceptional piece of costume jewelry? If you took it to the pawn shop, you'd be lucky to get lunch at Tim Horton's. You don't think I got better things to do than snatch Cracker Jack prizes from Macbeth extras?

PENNY: (Lunges at him. Dick intercedes.) I'll stop up that crazy mouth! See if I don't!

SHIFT: FALCON LADY and HOAGIE are dancing, a gallant and formal dance with an ornithological motif. HOAGIE swings the falcon lady around; she begins to simulate flight. BAD GUY enters, unobserved. He is tossing Penny's broach up and down in his hand. He slips it into his pocket before he approaches.

BAD GUY: May I cut in? (The dancers immediately stop.) Hey, flaky lady, I want you to tell me something. What is the point of a bird anyway? All they do is shit all over everything. They have no hands with which to manipulate objects. They have brains the size of peanuts. Freedom is wasted on them. They are just here to make us jealous. I would like to imprison them all in a giant birdcage and launch them into space where gravity is fair to all.

FALCON LADY: You won't get me.

BAD GUY: (Interested.) Eh?

FALCON LADY: You won't get me.

BAD GUY: They are going to smash like jellyfish, flaky lady. You are going to wear them on your shoes.

FALCON LADY: (Slowly.) You are so bad at what you do.

BAD GUY: (Smiling, he approaches her.) That's it. You show some spunk. You give Guy the what for. (Notices HOAGIE.) Hey, who is this little guy? I didn't hardly notice him he is so little. (HOAGIE pushes him.) All right, this is good. This is an unexpected pleasure for Bad Guy. (Guy starts to take off his leather jacket.) Guy will ride you like a little bitch all through the night. (Guy starts to unbutton his shirt.) I tell you in advance there will be no quarter for you. (When he turns

around, HOAGIE straight-arms him in the throat.) Ack-ack- (He drops to one knee. Strained voice.) All right, I regret everything I've done. I'm sorry. (He picks up his jacket and leaves, slowly flapping his wings

like a bird. The FALCON LADY smiles at HOAGIE, who is feeling ten feet tall. They look up again.)

SONG: WHAT MAKES BIRDS FLY

FALCON LADY: Everyone needs a tiny, little space, not necessarily on a high-cliff face,
Not necessarily on a ledge above, it doesn't even have to be a house of love.
It doesn't need a kitchen; it doesn't need a door;
It doesn't need fences, or cupboards, or floors.
It doesn't need a lock and key - you can still count on birdies coming down to see.

What makes birds fly is a delicate art
But to put it quite simply it's a lightness of heart

It's not just a matter of their bones being hollow,
or the windy, winding currents they follow.
It's not just a matter of thrust and propulsion;
to think in such terms is a act of revulsion.
The crow is gypsy of the sky,
but the falcon never needs to explain why
Because the falcon is a surge of power
that shames the red-light radio tower.

What makes birds fly is a delicate art
But to put it quite simply it's a lightness of heart

They don't think they're lost in mountain top haze;
they don't think they're blinded by a fjord's glaze.
They didn't alight in this hateful, mean land
simply by missing a turnoff at Greenland.
They haven't got weary on wayward flights;
they came to this glassy canyon of lights
They came to claim their smoggy steeple;
they came because they love the people.

What makes birds fly is a delicate art
But to put it quite simply it's a lightness of heart.

HOAGIE claps his hands in appreciation. The FALCON LADY blushes. She points up.
The chicks are named Winken, Blinken, and Nod. (Appropriately, HOAGIE nods.)

SHIFT: HOT DOG STAND

HOT DOG DICK and JEREMY BREWER have concluded their preliminary search with no success.

DICK: So you got something to tell me?

BREWER: If we sent those smells out -

DICK: The broach. You got something to tell me about the broach?

BREWER: You know what, she never really even showed it to me. I don't even know what we're looking for.

DICK: You didn't take it?

BREWER: No.

DICK: Then who would've?

BREWER: Who am I supposed to be? Hercule Poirot?

DICK: You're not him.

BREWER: That's what I'm saying.

DICK: Is there anybody inside you there who would have taken it?

BREWER: Dick, Dick, Dick...

DICK: I'm going to make sure she fills out a report for the police and I'm going to make sure that they listen to her.

BREWER: That's good. That's very responsible.

DICK: If you give it to me now, we can say that we found it.

BREWER: Can't we talk about something else? Like wraps. We could use some wraps. Everybody seems to want to eat them wraps.

DICK: Go home, Jeremy. This isn't working out.

BREWER: What?

DICK: I can't trust you.

BREWER: I'm fired?

DICK: You were never hired. We were just trying you out.

BREWER: I'll get you, Dick. I'll sic the Board of Health on you. I'll go find a phone book right now.

DICK: People will eat them anyway. They love them. Besides, when that inspector comes, I'll have this place in tip-top shape.

BREWER: You mix up the meat in your basement sink!

DICK: (Dignified.) You say I do; I say I don't - and which one of us is of sound mind?

BREWER: You never wanted to help me.

DICK: You just make sure that you keep taking your medication, and think of that poor old woman, Brewer - she's talking about killing herself and it wouldn't surprise me if she did - and there it is. I'm sorry but you have to go.

BREWER: (Snarling.) You've dedicated your life to poor quality meat by-products. (Exits.)

DICK: They are not poor quality! (Makes circles at his temple.) You! You are poor quality! You need round-the-clock supervision. Yeah, you may have fooled them but you didn't fool me! Beefy tumors! That's right, run away! Run away from the knowledge that what I say is true!

SHIFT: SHREEMORE is down on all fours with a tape measure. He has placed squares of cardboard under his knees so as not to gunk up his trousers. AMIN is still on the phone.

SHREEMORE: Have you seen our mascot yet, Eddie? It's a pig - a blue pig in a toque and a woolly scarf - Cold Porker! Get it? Cold Parker! That's marketing genius, man. I got the sketches on my desk. (Gestures.) Anyway, right over there, next to the husky rides, we're gonna put an eighty foot statue of Cold Porker, and his tongue's gonna be a slide for the kids.

AMIN: Yeah, Ganch, we've decided to get it all at once. We're driven like that. We'll sleep in tomorrow...no, not you, you've got work to do...well, it's the life you chose, remember that...so what? You're tired. I'm tired. How does pissing and moaning eliminate fatigue, Ganch? Is that in the latest issue of Men's Health? You got to be careful. Otherwise you might have an aneurysm right at the breakfast table and all your kids will remember is this hideous, twitching freak...yeah, try hanging up on me, Ganch. That would be the economic equivalent of throwing yourself in front of a train.

SHREEMORE: Tell Ganch we're gonna need more port-a-potties than we thought. In fact, we're gonna need all the port-a-potties.

AMIN: Get a pen, Ganch. I don't trust you to remember this. What do you mean you don't have a pen?...you don't have one anywhere in your house? Hey, I've got an idea. How about you don't buy big people food anymore. How about you follow me around and suckle at my breast? Maybe if I work out for a while I can carry you around in a snugly...oh come on, Ganch! Sure you've been this mad before. I'm motivating you. You'll thank me some day. You can read all about it in my new managerial guide Ganch and People Like Him...yeah, well you should be flattered.

SHIFT: HOPPER'S COFFEE SHOP

CARLA and BUNDLE are looking over menus. BERTRAND has his head down on the counter, an open bottle of amoretto in front of him. All three have a small empty flute in front of them.

BERTRAND: Where the hell could he have gone? He was my ride home.

CARLA: You're an unhappy person, I can tell. (Points to an item in the menu.) Hey, can you make us a couple of these Havarti and clam sandwiches?

BERTRAND: Two "Jersey Cross the Mersies"? Yeah, why the hell not. (Gets up.) Say, are you interested in funny stories that are a little risque? Well, I sure am. Anyway, Napoleon and James Joyce both had something in common, besides being European, they both liked dirty, unwashed panties. (Pause.) Well, I just thought I'd tell you. Did you see where he went? This is totally fucking unprecedented. (No reply.) Bread? Where's the bread? Clam's too expensive this month so I'm using zebra mussel. Ha! But not for yours - don't worry.

CARLA: You know what I think the essential weakness of your shtick is? It's the discongruity between the assumed roles of the well-read philosopher and the ribald clown. I think you'd have much better luck if one persona got priority.

BERTRAND: (Broken up.) I let you use my bathroom.

PENNY pokes her head in the door.

PENNY: (To Carla.) Hey! Get away from her!

BRING'EM pokes his head in the door.

BRING'EM:(Also to Carla.) Hey! Get away from her!

CARLA: (Tousles Bundle's hair.) Good night, Bundle. (She exits with BRING'EM.)

BERTRAND: Well, you're gonna have to leave. I'm not attracted to you. (Passes BUNDLE what he's made of the sandwich.) Here. It's just Havarti.

PENNY: (As BUNDLE walks by her.) Bundle, my broach was stolen! Someone stole it right off my head! It was that loon Jeremy Brewer, and Dick gave him the sack because he wouldn't come clean. Bundle, where you been? I needed you to help me. I can't get by without that broach. I'm gonna slit my wrists with a pop can. I'm gonna hang myself from one of those metal posts with the horse-heads on them. Bundle, aren't you listening to me? (She is gone.) Ain't nobody want to listen? Pretty bad business when even the people who got nothing won't help you.

SONG: I WAS A CHILD LIKE YOU WERE A CHILD

I was a child like you were a child
The whole world was before us
I was a child like you were a child
Is my sad and mournful chorus

When I was a child and I looked ahead
The future was rosy and glowing
But if I could see then where I'd be now
I'd make myself stop growing
And though self-loathing is common
It's the echo that comes off the bottom

It didn't have to end up this way
It could have ended up any other way
Couldn't it? I mean, couldn't it?

When I was a girl my face was brown
And my dress got dirty dragging on the ground
And they called me "Bad Luck Penny"

When it comes to money, that's hardly worth any
But she's good for a tumble or two
And an ice cream cone when we're through
To drip and dribble down her non-prominent chin.

Still I looked through the window and saw laughing faces
Unicorns prancing at a ferned oasis
Have turned into skeletons and pervert clowns
And the staircase has led nowhere but down
It didn't have to end up this way
It could have ended up any other way
Couldn't it? I mean, couldn't it?

I was a child like you were a child
The whole world was before us
I was a child like you were a child
Is my sad and mournful chorus.

SHIFT: RADIO BROADCAST BOOTH

X-MACHINA: Hello, all you creatures of the night - you unhallowed hordes of insomniacs, alcoholics, and the unemployable - it's time for our nightly targeting of a peacefully sleeping, respectable citizen. It's time to prematurely rouse a day labourer for our cheap, unscripted amusement. That's right, it's time for... (Brings out a rooster puppet.) Harold of the Morn! (Dials a number. We hear a phone ringing. Finally, a sleepy voice answers.)

VOICE: Hello...

X-MACHINA: Hello, it's Harold of the Morn! Just thought today might be a nice day to linger over breakfast!

VOICE: Who is it?

X-MACHINA: Harold of the Morn! What were you dreaming about? Anything interesting?

VOICE: My mother. We lost her last Christmas. She had a ping pong paddle and an armband with a swastika. She was riding on emu back but the emu didn't have legs, it had wheels.

X-MACHINA: Hmm...Dr. Jung's not going to be too happy about that! Any pretty ladies in your dream?

VOICE: My mom was a pretty lady. (Pause.) Who is this again?

X-MACHINA: (Rapidly losing enthusiasm.) Harold of the Morn! I'm a rooster! I work for a radio station.

VOICE: Oh, did I win anything?

X-MACHINA: Nope, in fact, you know what? Go back to sleep. This isn't even happening. What'd you eat before you went to bed?

VOICE: I can't remember.

X-MACHINA: Well, whatever it was, it was laced with PCP. Toodle-loo from Harold of the Morn!

VOICE: I'm sure glad it's you, Harold. When I heard the phone ring, I thought it might have been the cops. I did something that I'm really ashamed of tonight (Click.)

X-MACHINA: And my hypothesis is confirmed once again: humour, like a flower, cannot flourish in the absence of sunlight. I banish Harold to the museum of half-baked ideas and continue with the simple provision of music. (Music plays.)

SHIFT: BOB NOZZLE with his guitar case on his lap, tabulating change. NETTIE is half-asleep beside him, rolled up in a blanket.

NOZZLE: (Holds up a ring of keys.) Somebody threw their car keys in here.

NETTIE: Maybe they're van keys. (Pause.) We should maybe get a dog, you know, for protection.

NOZZLE: You got me. I'd die for you, Nettie. I'd let someone impale me for you.

NETTIE: You can be a such a pleasant boy.

NOZZLE: "Every time I try to tell you the words just come out wrong, so I have to say I love you in a song."

NETTIE: (Squirms.) Ooo. Ooo. Come on over here. (He snuggles in beside her, still holding the keys.)

NOZZLE: (Pretends to insert a key in an imagined ignition.) And you can sleep beside me all the way down the highway. (Turns it.)

SHIFT: HOT DOG STAND

HOAGIE and the FALCON LADY are sharing a hot dog. DICK is waxing poetically.

DICK: Yep, you two helped me to remember that, even in the darkest night, when everything around you seems to be extinguishing itself under the white hot, scalding moon - somewhere there are new things beginning. Love will never succumb. Hey, can you two do me a favour? Can you try to eat that hot dog from both ends at once like the spaghetti scene in Lady and the Tramp? It would mean a lot to me. It would conjure up memories of the sainted Mrs. Dick, now as good as dead to me. At one time, we, too, we're pie-eyed. At one time, we, too, had hearts a-flutter. Come now, please. Humour a sentimental old fellow.

They try to appease him. The attempt culminates with the FALCON LADY biting HOAGIE in the face. Ah, that's too bad. Wait, I got some ice here.

SHIFT: BAD GUY massaging his throat. BREWER tries to walk by but Guy blocks his passage.

BAD GUY: Hey, you, shifty, where you going?

BREWER: Please don't talk to me.

BAD GUY: Oh yeah, I'm gonna talk to you. Everybody around here's my friend. You're gonna be my friend too. Hey, how come you ain't out on delivery?

BREWER: (Slowly.) I don't want to do that any more.

BAD GUY: I can't blame you. You looked stupid. You couldn't have looked more stupid if they made you carry the bag around in your mouth.

BREWER: Well, somebody had to do it.

BAD GUY: Many a time I'd see you walk by here with your little bag and I'd say to myself: "There goes somebody stupid."

BREWER: What's the ultimate goal here? Is it to get hit?

BAD GUY: You couldn't hit me. Your hand would wither to a stump.

BREWER: Ah yes, I recognize that look now. I've seen it in mirrors. It's impossible to fake.

BAD GUY: What look?

BREWER: You poor man, the next couple of years are going to be hell for you. It's like the door of the haunted house just slammed shut. First, you're gonna be lashing out at everybody around you, pretending you're fine, pretending you're putting up a fight - that's probably where you are now. The next step will be the erosion of all belief: you will no longer be able to take anything for granted. You'll get to the point where you can't be sure that that carton of ice cream you put in your fridge last night isn't full of scorpions now. Your bed will no longer be a place of refuge because you can pry back your mattress and see faces looking up from a dark pond. Eventually you won't be able to tell if you're asleep or awake and you'll be afraid to eat anything because later you'll find out it was an old sock or a handful of staples - that's when you'll try to take your life for the first time, but, in the desire to go painlessly, you'll fail and you'll wake up in a place where people always talk softly to you and you have all the human dignity of a leprous mongoloid with his pants full of shit. That's the road map, friend - now you have a pleasant trip!

BAD GUY: (Sheepishly.) I'm a demon. (He drifts away slowly, holding his throat with one hand and his head with the other.)

SONG: RECIDIVISM

BREWER: Recidivism - is the unpardonable sin!

Recidivism makes you do it again, and again, and again, etc.

I've seen the back of the hangman; he's a big, brawny man.
He carries a big, black leather book full of all of his plans.
Sometimes you choke on visions, and sometimes you gag on dreams,
But the way to get by is to occupy a world of non-extremes.

Recidivism - is the unpardonable sin!
Recidivism makes you do it again, and again, and again, etc.

At best, it takes vacations; at worst, it will not kill.
Clarity comes in a needle and oblivion comes in a pill.
When reason's toppled on his throne, confusion is crowned king
And they say you're well, but you say "like hell", and it's just a passing thing.

Recidivism - is the unpardonable sin!
Recidivism makes you do it again, and again, and again, etc.

The day my mind walked out on me is a day I can't remember.
They said they had to hold me down when they caught me last September
Because I wanted to tear myself, tear myself from this level,
Tear myself from this cul-de-sac with its spinning, grinning devil.

Recidivism - is the unpardonable sin!
Recidivism makes you do it again, and again, and again, etc.

He takes a piece of paper out of his pocket and consults it before exiting. Enter BRING'EM followed by CARLA.

BRING'EM: So what if her feelings are hurt? What's she got to do with us? Look, you need to start concentrating on your work and stop worrying about mutts.

CARLA: You didn't have to degrade her, to make her feel ugly. That's the way you'd treat me if I let you.

BRING'EM: I'm patient to a fault. If you worked for anyone else, you'd be trying to suck dick with your jaw wired shut.

CARLA: Tell me the truth, though. You deliberately put me in situations that you know will humiliate me, don't you? If someone calls up who just wants a normal lay, you're not interested. It's like you're trying to break a bad pony: the less pride I got, the more valuable I am to you. That's how it works, isn't it?

BRING'EM: Look, I challenge you. I make you realize things about yourself. Don't you remember how excited you were when we first started this?

CARLA: (Contemptuously.) Temptation research.

BRING'EM: That's right. You're a goddamn living archetype.

CARLA: So what are we trying to prove now?

BRING'EM: That people are deeply frightened of their own potential for perversity. It's some important work we're doing, and you're a valued research associate. That girl? You know it would have been unthinkable to bring her in. Our roles are starting to dominate our personalities - that's got to be dealt with separately -

CARLA: You're a man who mistreats children - who likes to make them cry.

BRING'EM: I did what she expected me to do. My actions were dictated by my role.

CARLA: That's bullshit! It's just meanness.

BRING'EM: What's the point of being mean to someone like that? It serves no purpose.

CARLA: Well, I'm done with this.

BRING'EM: What?

CARLA: I'm disassociating myself from the experiment.

BRING'EM: You can't. We're not finished.

CARLA: No, I'm serious, Henry. You're on your own.

BRING'EM: Henry? (In an undertone.) There's no Henry here. (Nods.) I see. I'm expected to fine-tune my performance. (Begins to take off his jacket.)

CARLA: What are you doing?

BRING'EM: I am removing a restrictive outer garment so that I will be better able to thrash you. You have expressed a desire that I assume a more aggressive persona, and I am happy to oblige you.

CARLA: You wouldn't dare, Henry. You've never done anything like that.

BRING'EM: A moment's time will tell. (He seizes CARLA who immediately begins to kick and scream.)

CARLA: This isn't funny! This isn't funny! (BUNDLE rushes out and starts to pound ineffectually on BRING'EM's back.)

BRING'EM: Oh no, I won't have this. I won't have this melodrama! (They both start to tug him in different directions.) Don't touch me with your grubby little mitts! It's not funny! Stop it, I told you (He throws BUNDLE into the back wall. She collapses holding her face.)

BUNDLE: Owwww...

CARLA: You made her cry again, you bastard! (She starts to strike at him in earnest.)

BRING'EM: It's not funny! It's not funny! (He hits her. On the other side of the stage, HOT DOG DICK grabs a pair of tongs and runs over to lend assistance to CARLA.)

DICK: She may not be much of a lady, but she's still a lady! (Hits BRING'EM with the tongs.)

BREWER: (Enters reading in a loud voice.) How to make a Sick Dick hot dog - take the intestinal lining of a sow with hoof and mouth disease, leave it out to fester in the sun for a week, and fill it with the following: pork fat, more pork fat, flakes of paint, two pinches of pencil shavings, a booger, one fingernail paring, Dick's or otherwise -

PENNY: (Rushes at BREWER.) You give me back my broach, you insane person! (Notices BUNDLE on the ground.) Bundle! Bundle, who hurt you? (BUNDLE points to BRING'EM. PENNY charges him.) You dirty, satanic pimp! You can break my neck and I won't care!

DICK: (To Brewer.) This is a crime against reputation.

BREWER: (Continues reading.) How to make a Sick Dick hot dog - take an old bicycle inner tube and fill it with a peeled rat -

DICK: Brewer! Somebody needs to be called about you! You come with me! (They struggle as Dick tries to apprehend him.)

Enter SHREEMORE and AMIN.

SHREEMORE: No wonder the cab won't come, this place is a battle zone. We got to stop this, Eddie! We can't let the papers get wind of this!

GANCH: Ganch, get the cops! The cops!...No, that's Copp's Build-All, shit-for-brains, we need the heat!... I can't apologize. It's an emergency...Don't say you've had enough of me, Ganch. As the anorexic lady sings "We've only just begun" -

SHREEMORE: Get in there, Eddie! Get in between somebody!

Enter BAD GUY.

BAD GUY: Hey, radiation head, it's me - the scuz. You hurt me in my honour. Time to tango. (He belly-butts EDDIE who clocks him with the phone.)

AMIN: Nice shot, Ganch. We're holding our own. (On the ground, BAD GUY reaches into his pocket and comes out with PENNY's broach which he stabs into Amin's leg.) AH! Jesus, Ganch! The scuz stuck us! Hold on, I'm gonna kick him with my good leg. (He roundhouses GUY. Penny sees her broach lying on top of him and disengages herself from BRING'EM.)

PENNY: He had it! That damned demon had it! Sorry, Jeremy Brewer! Here's a pasting to make up for my mental anguish! (She starts to stomp GUY. Everyone is brawling. Their actions will freeze at the sound of X-MACHINA's booming voice.)

X-MACHINA: (Having thrown open the window, he begins to bellow into his megaphone.) Enough! Enough! Oh ye-of-little-self-restraint! Do not raise your hands in anger! You dishonour us all! (He looks to his left. The chicks are waking.) Hello, chickie, hello. I didn't mean to wake you. (It attempts to attack him but, lacking sufficient wing strength, it plummets to the ground with a predictable splat. We hear an anguished scream. It is the FALCON LADY. She rushes to the carcass followed by HOAGIE, who is also screaming, only silently.

(Enter BERTRAND.)

BERTRAND: Hoagie, my ride! You just left me. I didn't know - (sees the bird.) Oh God, oh God, that's a bad sign. (They all gather round this scene of sorrow. The FALCON LADY holds and strokes the dead chick. Suddenly, there is an abrupt shift and BERTRAND is back at the coffee shop, talking to the FUNKY CUSTOMER who is busy doodling.) So I'm not shitting you, Mr. Crumb - it all happened on just a regular night. A Tuesday - this was in June of last year. Yeah, this town may appear to be boring but not when the lights go down. Hey, are you a big D.H. Lawrence fan? Yeah, I mean, who isn't, right? Well, do you know he had chronic boner trouble in real life, so he transferred his virility to the page. He was shocked as hell when his novels were well-received because, to him, they were just customized whacking material - just a little something to put some spring into his ding. (His voice fades into the voice of X-MACHINA.)

X-MACHINA: Good morning, early risers, as your day begins, X-Machina's comes to an end. I'm planning on wolfing down a greasy breakfast at the corner and then I'm gonna head off for several hours of uninterrupted slumber, but you'll be hearing me again when the street-lights come out like little golden rhinestones on the black velvet of a new night, when the day goes to the other side of the world to hide out for a while. (Looks down. The FALCON LADY and HOAGIE are setting up their lawnchairs.) Yep, it seems to me it was pretty near a year ago that we lost little Blinken the falcon chick. This year we pray that they all fly away, just like our souls will one fine morning. (Smiles. Looks out.) A fine morning just like this one.

SONG: NOT DEAD YET

As every night must taper to the needle-eye of morning,
So every waking soul must cease its day to day adjourning
And realize that this day's blessing might be the best you'll get
You're one day closer to your closure, but you're not dead yet.

As every war must taper to the tired sigh of peace,
So night will push in daylight when the dawn folds like a crease
And even though the weather forecast says it's cold and wet,
Give a shake and make your break - you're not dead yet.

As every life must taper to the pallor of the grave
And you must bid your bed goodbye, to bondage you're enslaved
And you find you're running someplace to which you really don't want to get
There's billions who'd give anything if they were not dead yet.

As every breath must taper to the rhythm of a rattle
So everyone must be undone by Chronos' final battle
And whether it burned hot or cold, your sun is sure to set
But take it well, and give a yell - you're not dead yet.

Don't be teased by epiphanies or claims of revelation
We're all gonna wait together at the final check-out station
Where we'll stare at the horizon and the fate that we've all met
And, one last time, our final line will be "We're not dead yet."

The Geminis: A Play in One Act

By Hannah Feiner

March 2001

Characters:

MARLENE BENNER, an art Professor (walks with a limp)

THERESA SINCLAIR, a secretary, Marlene's lover

MILES WILLIAMSON, Theresa's boyfriend in high school

A Note On Setting: The Geminis is set in two time frames: the present and the past. In the present parts of the play, Marlene and Theresa are both thirty-eight years old. The past parts of the play are set twenty years ago, in Marlene and Theresa's final year of high school. Scenes set in this time period should be signified by a change in the lights.

A Note On Set and Blocking: The stage should be essentially bare, except for a few key pieces. On DSR should be a rocking chair: this is where Marlene will often retreat. On DSL should be a couple of blocks representing steps: this is Theresa's area. While each character is by no means limited to her "side", in certain scenes Marlene will be placed at her rocking chair and Theresa at her steps. It is important that the rocking chair and steps be reserved for present parts of the play only. Another important item in the set is the mirror that Theresa often looks into. It should be placed DSC, just a little towards Theresa's side. The mirror could be an empty frame or merely imaginary, but it is important that it remain in place throughout the play. One or two chairs may be used for Marlene's analyst scenes as well as the scenes that take place in Marlene and Theresa's apartment.

A Note On Characters: It is important that the actresses playing Marlene and Theresa separate each character's teenage self and adult self. In the past, Marlene is very unsure of herself. Theresa fades in and out. Also, she is pleasing and docile. In the present, Marlene goes between being tired and upset and nervous for her show. She is constantly annoyed by Theresa. Theresa feels weighed down by her life and frustrated with Marlene.

I

[DSR: Marlene is sitting in an armchair; DSC: Theresa is facing mirror.] During the present part of the scene, Marlene is comforting herself with her narrative.

MARLENE: Present

The first time I saw her was in a mirror. It was twenty years ago, in the third floor girls' washroom. We were there for very different reasons. She was fixing her make-up and I was eating my lunch. (pause) I (pause) chose not to wear make-up and she didn't look like she ate. [Hobbles across stage to near Theresa. Begins writing in journal and eating her lunch.]

LIGHTS CHANGE

In the past, Marlene is disgusted by Theresa but also uncertain of herself.

MARLENE: Past

Who is that? (pause) She's grotesque. Pale and blond in that ugly cheerleader way. Too skinny. Her hips curve too gracefully into her waist and her feet are sickeningly delicate. Altogether far too feminine. And stupid. She doesn't realize that I'm writing about her. (pause) Where is she from? (pause) She must be new. Oh well, one of the hounds will get her soon enough. [Goes back to armchair.]

[Theresa looks down and exits.]

LIGHTS CHANGE BACK

II

In the present, Marlene reflects on herself at 18. She feels pity.

Present

MARLENE: [from armchair] The hounds got me, in a manner of speaking. (sighs) What do you do with a

teenage girl who doesn't have any friends, but drools over paintings of women? What course of action do you take if she has a sickeningly high IQ., but can't go to school without crying? (pause) You send her to a therapist, an analyst. (pause) A head-shrinker. But what if she hates him? You send her to more just like him, doctors who affirm that she's socially inept before writing gibberish on their prescription pads. (pause) You wait...You wait until you get a recommendation for a guy that has a six month waiting list. You call him yourself. You throw out words like "chronic" and "suicide". You even confess about the paintings of women. (pause) He has an opening the next day. (pause) Rory looked about a hundred years old. He told me if I called him doctor he might as well put his navy uniform on. We got along. (pause) He told me all about my condition, gave me books and papers to read. "I should be treating them," he said. "Not you." [Gets up to "talk" to Rory.]

LIGHTS CHANGE

Past

In the past, Marlene has one of her only opportunities to really talk to someone else. She is scared of her own voice and her feelings about Theresa.

MARLENE: [Sitting on chair/walking around in Rory's office DSC] School? It was all right. At lunch there was this new girl in the washroom. She looked in the mirror for so long. It made me nauseous, Rory. The way she stared at herself - she didn't notice that I was even there. (Listens to Rory.) Pretty? I suppose. There was something weird about her though; she was too quiet, too delicate. Almost like a child...Naive...Inspid. (Listens to Rory.)What! You think I like her (pause) because she's pretty? (pause) I mean...it doesn't matter, Rory. If you'll recall, she was only looking at her reflection. [Steps back to watch Theresa.]

III

[DSC: Hall in high school. Theresa enters.] She looks into a compact mirror. Marlene watches.

When Miles enters, he talks to Theresa - Theresa continues to look into the mirror. Miles wants Theresa to feel special because he is asking her out, but he finds her reaction weird. He becomes more forceful. Theresa is out of it, she barely looks at Miles. They are not aware of Marlene's presence.

Past

THERESA: [Into compact mirror.] Yeah, it's all right here. There are so many people. There's this boy, Miles. I think he...I don't know, Sarah. (pause) No, that's not what I meant...I, I would never do that to you, Sarah.

MILES: (Enters) Hey Theresa.

THERESA: (Jumps) Hey Miles, how's it going?

MILES: Not so bad. Did you come to the game last night?

THERESA: Yeah. I have a sore throat from cheering. (pause) Congratulations, you were really good.

MILES: You're just saying that...

THERESA: (interrupts) No...I

MILES: Anyway Theresa, I was wondering if you wanted to go to the movies tomorrow night?

THERESA: (pause) Sure.

MILES: I'll pick you up at eight.

THERESA: Okay. [Starts to exit.]

MILES: See you then Theresa. [Exits other way.]

[Marlene remains on stage. She sits down to talk to Rory again.]

IV

During this scene, Marlene is giddy. She is excited about the student art show, but also very nervous.

MARLENE: past

Hi Rory. (Listens to Rory.)Yes thank you, I'm tremendous in fact. I was selected to participate in a student art show at the AGO. (Listens to Rory.) Photography. (Listens to Rory.) I do. I would like to capture somebody that has not grown up in spirit. (pause) I want to use the girl from the washroom. Remember, the blond? I see her every day. She looks in the mirror for so long while her stupid boyfriend paces outside. Don't

you think she'd be perfect, Rory? She's completely transfixed by her own image. And she's...breathtaking. I would take her North of the city, to the forests that look like they're burning at sundown. She would look so pale by comparison, so innocent. (Listens to Rory.) When? I don't know! She doesn't know who I am...Why would she want to model for me? (Listens to Rory.) That's true. I really do want to use her. (pause) I could ask her at lunch, I guess. (Listens to Rory.) Okay, I will. Thanks Rory.
[Theresa and Miles enters DSC.]

V

During this scene, Marlene is terrified. She is very aware of her body, and feels very awkward. Theresa begins in a daze, but becomes very pleasant when Marlene introduces herself. There is chemistry between the girls which Miles continuously interrupts. Miles is hostile towards Marlene.

Past

[Marlene approaches Theresa and taps her on the shoulder.]

MARLENE: Excuse me?

THERESA: Sorry, I'll get out of your way.

MILES: (Grabs Theresa around the waist.) Come on Theresa...

MARLENE: No. Actually, I wanted to talk to you - I'm Marlene.

THERESA: I'm Theresa. It's nice to...I always see you in the washroom, but...

MARLENE: You? Oh (pause) I wanted to ask (pause) I'm going to be in a student art show...I'm doing photography (pause) I was wondering, well, you look (pause) just like my theme and I was wondering (pause) would you consider...modeling for me?

MILES: She doesn't...

THERESA: (interrupts) Model?

MARLENE: ...whenever's most convenient...

THERESA: That would be neat.

MILES: You've never...

THERESA: I don't have any experience. Is that all right?

MARLENE: You will? Thank you. Experience? No, no that's fine...

THERESA: When are we going to start?

MARLENE: Well, I don't have that much time...so I should begin sketching...If that's all right with you. When do you...

MILES: Tonight I have a football game.

THERESA: Not tonight. (Pause) Tomorrow after school would be fine.

MARLENE: Okay, do you want to meet in front of the art room?

THERESA: Sounds good.

MILES: Let's go.

THERESA: I can drive us anywhere, if you want. If you want to take pictures somewhere else, I mean, I have my dad's old Ford. I didn't think you could drive...because, you know...

MILES: Theresa! [Begins to exit.]

MARLENE: No, I can't...If it had been my other knee maybe...but (pause) I'll see you tomorrow, okay?

THERESA: Bye.

[Marlene goes to her armchair, Theresa freezes on stage.]

LIGHTS CHANGE BACK

VI

In Marlene's present reflection, she is happy.

Present.

MARLENE: [from armchair] It got easier. I hadn't considered that she would be nice. (pause) I started by sketching her...I would shake with nervousness at having her close enough to touch...she would just smile. I began thinking about her more often. I tried not to, but... (pause) When I started photographing her, we went

North, to the forests that "burn" at twilight...

LIGHTS CHANGE

Past

Marlene is awkward. She tries to get power over Theresa when they talk about Miles, but this ends at the emotional climax of the scene (their "moment"). Theresa is withdrawn at first, but loosens up when Marlene pretends to be Miles. When Theresa mentions Sarah, she zones out.

[Marlene gets up and goes to DSC: a forest. She begins photographing Theresa.]

MARLENE: Keep walking... Slower...Now look up...Stop....Just a few more seconds...Perfect. (pause) That's all we can do, I'm afraid. The light won't hold out.

THERESA: I like the dark better. It's a pretty long walk to the car. Do you want to rest for a bit?

MARLENE: Sure. Unless you need to get back.

THERESA: No. What's there to go back for? A date with Miles, when all he does is jump on top of me...

MARLENE: Is...that's how you feel about it?

THERESA: Yeah.

MARLENE: So why do you...let him?

THERESA: (long pause) I don't know. I guess I'm used to it.

MARLENE: Why don't you say something to him. You can speak, can't you? Why are you even with him?

THERESA: I don't know. He asked me out, so...He's a jerk though, Marlene. I sort of want to break up with him.

MARLENE: Sort of? Don't be so weak.

THERESA: Fine. I don't like Miles at all!

MARLENE: Better. When are you going to dump him?

THERESA: I can't. I've never been the one to break it off. What would I say?

MARLENE: Theresa! Listen to yourself! Do you want to practise? Hey Theresa, how's it going?

THERESA: Fine thanks, Miles. How are you?

MARLENE: No! Not "fine thanks". Say: "I'm terrible and it's your fault!"

THERESA: I'm terrible Miles, and it's because of you.

MARLENE: What are you talking about baby? I played well last night, didn't I?

THERESA: I'm not talking about football. I want to break up with you!

MARLENE: Whoa, what was that? I was just examining my biceps.

THERESA: I want to break up! No, we're officially not together. Got it?

MARLENE: Yeah. I'll miss you baby.

THERESA: Well I hate you!

MARLENE: (pause) Good Theresa. I didn't realize you were capable of that much anger.

THERESA: There's a lot you don't think I'm capable of.

MARLENE: No...I meant...you should break up with him. You could (pause) do better. You're very attractive and nice and...

THERESA: Come here.

[Theresa and Marlene turn to each other. Theresa cups Marlene's cheek without touching her. They look into each other's eyes for a moment, before turning away.]

MARLENE: Thank you.

THERESA: (cutting her off) I'm happy you asked me to do this...

MARLENE: (cutting her off) So am I.

THERESA: (pause) Marlene?

MARLENE: What?

THERESA: (pause) I used to have sister, Sarah. We looked so much alike (pause) everybody thought we were twins.

MARLENE: Who was (pause) older?

THERESA: We were reflections (pause) of each other. But (pause) there was a fire...

MARLENE: (interrupting) did she...

THERESA: (interrupting) a fire (pause) she was nine.

MARLENE: (interrupting) I'm sorry.

THERESA: (pause) Sometimes I think...we'd still look alike and (pause) I don't know.

MARLENE: What?

THERESA: (interrupting) I can't wait to see your photographs. When will they be ready?

MARLENE: I'll develop them in stages...but you can't see them until they're all together.

THERESA: So I have to wait...

MARLENE: ...until the show opens. I can't show them to you before...you might be disappointed.

[They part ways and go to opposite sides of the stage.]

LIGHTS CHANGE BACK

VII

Twenty years have past. Marlene and Theresa do not look at each other when they talk. Marlene knows that she has gotten an art show (VIII) so she should be a little bit giddy. She is questioning her self worth. Marlene becomes passionate as the scene progresses while Theresa withdraws.

Present

THERESA: Its been twenty years. I never saw the photographs. (pause) Marlene, dear, would you like a cup of tea before dinner?

MARLENE: Two decades. (pause) Yes, please Theresa. Make it strong.

THERESA: Two life times. (pause) Here you go, Marlene.

MARLENE: Sometimes I wonder what they think of me. (pause) Thank you.

THERESA: I'm used to headaches, to being sick. (pause) I'm going to lay down for a bit Marlene, my head hurts.

MARLENE: I try not to. I rarely think of them. (pause) Okay Theresa.

THERESA: It's nothing serious, not migraines or anything. Something I've grown accustomed to. I think it started when dad and I moved to Toronto, after the fire. Maybe it was the pollution, or all of the people.

MARLENE: The smart ones bother me most. The pony-tailed girls who don't complain when I mark them lower than they deserve. They look at me with wide eyes, trying to asses the depth of my jealousy.

THERESA: I only had surgery once.

MARLENE: I am jealous.

THERESA: I was fourteen...they told me that I...(pause) my ovaries were rotten.

MARLENE: Sometimes I wonder what they'd think of Theresa. "How did a crippled dyke catch her?" Their eyes would be wider than ever.

THERESA: Like fallen twins. (pause) It doesn't matter now. Once I asked Marlene about adopting.

MARLENE: (interrupting) You always have whims.

THERESA: (interrupting) I do love children. (pause) When they come to Dr. Matthew's, I watch them play from behind my desk. Once a mother asked me to hold her baby during her appointment.

MARLENE: If I had a conversation with one of them, what would she say? "What qualifies you to teach me?" I wouldn't be able to answer.

THERESA: He was only eight months old, with the softest black hair I've ever touched. He was crying when she handed him to me, but I rocked him until he fell asleep.

MARLENE: Last month I gave them this assignment: Photograph a child. Then write her life story.

THERESA: "You'll be a good mommy. When are you planning to have your first?" [Chuckle].

MARLENE: I was surprised...

THERESA: I smiled, kept smiling until they left the office

MARLENE: ...most of them handed in their photographs.

THERESA: (pause) I feel better now.

MARLENE: Now I have to mark all of them.

THERESA: My headache's almost gone.

MARLENE: I hope Theresa's started dinner.

THERESA: (interrupts) I should start dinner.

VIII

[Both women go to the kitchen of their apartment. Theresa begins preparing dinner.] Marlene is anxious about her show. Theresa tries (unsuccessfully) to connect with Marlene. Marlene should convey a feeling of superiority that she has built up to in VII.

Present

MARLENE: Are you feeling better Theresa?

THERESA: Yes, thank you, I am. How was your day?

MARLENE: It was good...wonderful, actually - I got a show!

THERESA: Really?

MARLENE: The owner of Edgar's gallery telephoned me. I open in eleven months.

THERESA: Congratulations! It's about time you get your own show, you're so talented.

MARLENE: Thank you Theresa. I'd forgotten that you were the authority on photography.

THERESA: I just meant...I'm happy for you, that's all.

MARLENE: Good, you're happy. You're unable to comprehend how much work I have in front of me. I have to prepare something on top of teaching full time. (pause) But you're happy. You probably think art falls down from the sky, like those pathetic magazines you read.

THERESA: I'm making a stir-fry for dinner, Marlene. Is that all right?

MARLENE: Sure.

THERESA: Unless you want to go out and celebrate...

MARLENE: We're fine here.

THERESA: It's up to you. (pause) What's your theme going to be? Do you know yet?

MARLENE: I do. I've had an idea for a while actually. I would like to show the ghosts of children. Not dead children necessarily, but the child inside every adult. The core, that for some reason, we extinguish.

THERESA: And that's why people have children in the first place, to find themselves! Maybe...

MARLENE: Pardon me Theresa? I've barely introduced my idea and you interrupt...

THERESA: I wasn't interrupting, I just thought...

MARLENE: I am not particularly concerned with your thoughts. (pause) I'm going to mark some papers, call me when dinner's ready. [Exits slowly.]

[Theresa watches her limp.]

IX

Theresa speaks slowly, as if her words are painful. She becomes very upset. When Marlene reads her poem, she sounds nervous, but also optimistic and proud.

Present

THERESA: [Goes to her steps.] She told me once. (pause). She was eight. She had to read a poem in front of the whole school.

MARLENE: [Enters, stands DSC.] The Raven by Marlene Benner.

THERESA: The school gym was gigantic; everybody's eyes burned so hard and so hot.

MARLENE: I see her every morning / always shiny, black and free / she sits outside my window / on a branch of my Oak tree.

THERESA: They clapped. I think she smiled then, kept smiling while she walked home from school. They saw her. They asked her why she was smiling.

MARLENE: Her wings are very powerful / she could fly forever / she knows her way around the sky / ravens are so clever.

THERESA: She kept walking but they walked faster and caught up and grabbed her book bag. She cried and they took her glasses and they laughed. She kept walking...She knew the rule about looking both ways but they had her glasses. She was still crying. The driver saw her. (pause) He braked. (pause) He hit her anyway.

MARLENE: I spoke to her at bedtime / I said I'd see her soon / then she said goodnight to me / in the pale

light of the moon.

THERESA: The doctor said her knee was shattered. She thought of fallen vases, broken bottles and her glasses. "They must have fallen off in the accident," her mom said, her dad said, the doctor said. The accident, she repeated.

MARLENE: When I woke the next morning / she was nowhere to be found / in night's dark she left me / Raven never made a sound. [Goes to armchair]

THERESA: The first time I asked her about her knee we were both twenty-eight.

MARLENE: It was an accident. It hurt too much to cry.

[Theresa lays down at the foot of her steps.]

X

Marlene is just beginning to understand the significance of her words. Theresa is talking in her sleep.

Present

MARLENE: Some nights, Theresa calls for her.

THERESA: Wait up Sarah, I'm coming!

MARLENE: Sarah was older. They looked alike. Other people thought they were like puppies. Always together: kissing, cuddling, holding hands. Puppy sisters. When it was time for Sarah to start kindergarten, she wouldn't go alone. Their mother decided to solve the problem by telling the school board that they were twins.

THERESA: You're going too fast! Wait for me!

MARLENE: The other girls admired the pretty twin sisters who spoke only to each other. Or, Sarah spoke and Theresa answered. Sarah invented the games they played and chose their clothes. Theresa did exactly as she was told.

THERESA: Where are you Sarah? It's not funny anymore, stop hiding.

MARLENE: One morning. When their father returned from town with one of his daughters, he didn't know why his house was on fire. (pause) He tried to get inside while Theresa waited in the car...not knowing.

THERESA: Come out Sarah! Please...I need you.

MARLENE: Theresa thought about fire for the entire drive to Toronto. She thought about what had happened - her home, her mother.

THERESA: Sarah! [gets up and exits]

MARLENE: Most of all, I think, Theresa wondered what fire does to shadows. [exits]

XI

Marlene and Theresa do not speak to each other during this scene. They start on opposite sides of the stage and move (in a "V") closer together as the scene progresses, until they almost hold hands at the end. Theresa begins by being excited: she is anticipating seeing Sarah in Marlene's photographs. By the end of the scene, she becomes almost hysterical. Marlene starts off anxious; near the end of the scene she loses herself (only talks through other people). Tension for both women builds throughout the scene.

Present

[Theresa enters USR. She is wearing an evening gown.]

THERESA: I am cold tonight: the opening night of Marlene's show

[Marlene enters USL. She is wearing a blazer.]

MARLENE: Edgar's Gallery. All day I tried not to think about who would be there.

THERESA: I'm wearing a new dress.

MARLENE: I didn't dwell upon the list of critics that kept pushing itself into my mind. It's better to expect nothing...

THERESA: Black...

MARLENE: I couldn't convince myself that it was really going to happen.

THERESA: ...Crosses down my back and...

MARLENE: Somehow I managed to get ready.

THERESA: ...Clings to me until it hits the floor.

MARLENE: I thought about my pictures. I imagined Edgar's filled with people: talking, laughing...

THERESA: In the mirror (pause) I put on my make-up. I thought about her pictures, wondered what to expect.

MARLENE: Too many people...

THERESA: She said her theme was the ghosts of children. But whose ghost? What children? In the mirror I...

MARLENE: (interrupts) My photographs need space, they need to be alone.

THERESA: I thought about sister children, twin children...I thought - but wouldn't allow myself to think.

MARLENE: (pause) The gallery opens at eight.

THERESA: We are silent the whole way there.

MARLENE: I look out the window.

THERESA: I pay attention to the road; I'm not used of driving in the dark.

MARLENE: The gallery is busy.

THERESA: People surround her as soon as we enter.

MARLENE: "Good evening Ms. Benner, could I offer you some wine?"

THERESA: I can't see the pictures, there are so many people.

MARLENE: "Ms. Benner, I would like to ask you a question..."

THERESA: I look around, I can't find her.

MARLENE: "Excuse me Ms. Benner. In the photograph Pricilla's Nest, could you tell me..."

THERESA: She's hiding.

MARLENE: "In The Broken Child, I don't see anybody Ms. Benner. Who is your subject?"

THERESA: She's lost!

MARLENE: Fire.

[Marlene and Theresa turn to each other.]

THERESA: Marlene? [Reaches for Marlene's hand.]

MARLENE: Excuse me Theresa.

[Both begin to exit, but freeze after a couple of step. Theresa's back is to the confrontation in XII.]

LIGHTS CHANGE

XII

Miles is honestly angry, not just ignorant. Marlene withdraws into herself.

Past

[Miles enters and startles Marlene with his first word.]

MILES: Marlene. What are you doing here so late?

MARLENE: I was just leaving.

MILES: Were you working on your pictures of Theresa?

MARLENE: I, ah...

MILES: That's all right Marlene. You don't have to be shy with me. The whole school knows you're a dyke.

[Marlene tries to leave.] Not so fast. Why did you take my girlfriend?!?

MARLENE: I didn't...

MILES: What do you see in her, anyway? Let's be honest, Theresa's an idiot...She's a good lay though. Isn't she! (pause) Answer me! Is Theresa a good fuck? [Pretend calmly] Oh. So you don't want to answer. Do you think I'm going to let you get away with taking queer pictures of my girlfriend? (pause) I thought about it. I was going to kick the shit out of you, but I thought to myself, "Miles, can you really hurt a cripple?" So I'm not going to kick the shit out of you? Okay Marlene? Is that okay with you?

MARLENE: [Quietly.] Yes.

MILES: [Yelling.] So you better limp along home, you fucking dyke. You don't want see your punishment. Go! Hurry-up! [Marlene walks away slowly. She goes to a chair in the "kitchen" and hangs her head.] Enjoy her tonight Marlene. Fuck her good and slow for me! [exits]

[Theresa turns around and looks in "her mirror" with wide eyes.]
LIGHTS CHANGE BACK

XIII

Theresa begins by being weak, Marlene angry (She has taken Miles' anger as her own.) When Marlene tells Theresa she is beautiful, Theresa takes Marlene's power. For the remainder of the scene, Theresa is not so much angry as determined.

Present

THERESA: (looks down) We do not speak for the rest of the evening. I drive her home in silence.

MARLENE: (angry) Well Theresa?

THERESA: (to herself) The photographs were taken in alleys.

MARLENE: Aren't you going to apologize?

THERESA: (to herself) They were black and white.

MARLENE: Answer me!

THERESA: (to herself) The children were dying. (pause: to Marlene) I'm sorry Marlene.

MARLENE: Are you? That's excellent Theresa. You embarrass me in front of Toronto's art world and you're sorry! One would think that after twenty years you'd understand...

THERESA: (interrupts) They liked your work.

MARLENE: Did they? I suppose you would be one to know. You are a graduate of secretarial school. (pause) Wait until that one hits the papers tomorrow - "Dyke photographer clings onto receptionist girlfriend." Or maybe they thought you were my sister. "Ugly duckling twin tries to make name for herself."

THERESA: Stop Marlene.

MARLENE: Why don't you stop your adolescent fits of passion? Look at you! All dressed up to go to some imaginary prom!

THERESA: I'm sorry.

MARLENE: You shouldn't have come. I was going to tell you... [long pause] I was scared (pause) that they would look more at you than at my work. Don't you see...you really are beautiful Theresa. I shouldn't have said...I'm just so tired. Come here.

THERESA: Don't touch me.

MARLENE: Shh! Don't say that. I'm sorry.

THERESA: Go to bed. You're exhausted.

MARLENE: Don't be mad. You know how I get when I'm nervous. Come Theresa.

THERESA: I'm not tired.

MARLENE: Soon, please Theresa. I'll be waiting. [exits]

THERESA: Goodnight, Marlene. [Picks up car keys and goes to her steps.]

XIV

Theresa is calm, reflective.

Present

THERESA: There was a fire. The principal told us the next morning.

LIGHTS CHANGE

VOICE of MILES: Contained. In the art room and the photography lab. If anybody has information, please see me in my office.

LIGHTS CHANGE BACK

THERESA: Marlene...she...didn't...she said it was an accident. (pause) There was a fire. I can see it now - flames licking her photographs, dancing about: yellow, orange. (pause) There was a fire. I was almost burned, you know...twenty pictures of me were trapped, suffocated: like I said...almost burned. [Exits.]

XV

[Marlene enters and sits in her rocking chair.] Marlene begins by being sad, but gains power after reading

Theresa's letter.

Present

MARLENE: I had the negatives, of course. I never looked at them. If Rory were still alive, he'd understand. To see her hair, an ebony smudge against the white-fire forest, would be too hard. (pause) My show closed today. The critics liked it. They said I was afraid of the children and their beauty. They said my fear was provocative, sexy (pause). My show closed today. That means Theresa's been gone for two weeks. She wrote me - one stamp, no return address.

THERESA: [Enters and sits on her steps.] Dear Marlene. I found it. After three days of driving and a week of searching. (pause) This is my first time back. (pause) There are more people now and so many new houses. (pause) There is almost nothing left of my old house, except for these cement porch steps. (pause) The first place I looked was the graveyard. Nothing. I must have knocked on every door before I was led back to where I started. (pause) They planted a tree here. "For Catherine Sinclair and her daughter Sarah. Death by fire, 1968." (pause) I always told myself that if I ever came back here, I'd stay. (pause) I can't though. (pause). I'm not here, like I thought I'd be. I...I don't know where I am. That's why I have to leave, Marlene. I'm going to keep going...further north maybe. There's so much I still need to do. (pause) I hope you'll take good care of yourself, Marlene. I read the reviews in The Globe and Mail. Congratulations. Love always, Theresa.

MARLENE: It's just like her not to apologize. Not to think about how much I've missed her. To leave...quietly. [Gets up and moves to DSC.] My show closed today. Most of the photographs sold. Next month, exams will be over. I've already handed in my resignation. I'm not sure where I'm going yet - a couple of galleries out west have contacted me, so I need to start (pause) photographing (pause). The other day, I took the subway home from York. I saw a boy begging in West Eglinton station. He was young, only thirteen or fourteen. Ugly. He was bald and his face was covered in burn scars. It was so hard to look at him. (pause; quietly) I'm glad I did, though. He was breathtaking.

PEDESTRIAN X

ACT ONE

The News

(The entire group sits around a couple of bar tables pushed together.
Assorted clutter.)

NIALL:...and the little bastard says to me, "What kind of bookstore doesn't carry Mein Kampf?" and I'm like, "this is a communist bookstore you cro-mag. Get out."

STEVE: And then you kicked his ass.

NIALL: And then I kicked his ass!

SUE: God, it's unreal, it's like, "what exactly did you enjoy about World War Two?"

TRAVIS: No kidding.

STEVE: "Hitler was misunderstood. And so am I."

LIL: They're slowly taking over the York.

TRAVIS: I thought those guys were Nazis. Either that or a scooter gang.

TIFFANY: I hate that. I can't even go in there anymore.

TRAVIS: Kids today.

SAM: If one of them tried anything with me, I'd kick his ass. I'd make him eat his own boots. And I'm the nicest guy I know. That's what fascism does to you.

JAYSON: Sam, we have to teach the world to sing, you and me.

NIALL: We should all go in there one day sporting our communist colours.

JAYSON: Enlightened anarchy, Niall. I'm telling you. Peace on Earth.

NIALL: What a fucking pipe dream! People are too stupid for that.

SUE: Aw, that's nice.

NIALL: You know it as well as I do. We're outnumbered by sheep.

STEVE: How can you speak about your fellow proles like that?

TIFFANY: He's bourgeoisie.

NIALL: Like hell.

STEVE: From the town of Bourgois.

TRAVIS: Is that Russian?

STEVE: Mm, Belgian.

SAM: Why, I'm drinking Belgian beer...right now.

LIL: That's bourgeois beer, Sam.

SAM: Well I'm not drinking it because I like it...

TIFFANY: Does anybody want to buy my Atari?

SUE: You have an Atari?

TRAVIS: Yeah, I'll buy it. I'll take that Betamax off your hands, too.

JAYSON: Don't sell the Atari, Tiff.

TIFFANY: You shut up. I need some money but fast.

NIALL: You could get a job.

TIFFANY: Oh, thanks, Niall. That's great advice. I hadn't thought of that.

SAM: I used to have an Atari. Maybe I still do. I should check my mom's attic.

SUE: I can't believe you have an Atari.

TRAVIS: The Methuselah of video games.

SAM: Do you have any games for it?

TIFFANY: Oh, shit yeah. I got a whole box of them. I got Tank War, and Rebound-

SAM: Rebound's awesome-

TIFFANY: And, uh, oh, oh, oh, what's it-River Bomber-
JAYSON: River Raider.
TIFFANY: Shit, I don't even remember the names of half them.
JAYSON: Berserk, Dig Dug, M.A.S.H., Donkey Kong...
SAM: Do you have Pong?
TIFFANY: No.
SAM: Pong sucks.
SUE: Do you have Pac Man?
TIFFANY: I have Ms. Pac Man.
TRAVIS:I miss the Atari breakfast cereals. Nothing like starting your day off with a bowl of Pac Man.
NIALL: What the hell are you doing?
JAYSON:I have a little piece of peanut wedged behind my furthest molar. It's irritating.
NIALL: Well use a toothpick!
(JAYSON makes a big deal of looking for a toothpick. One of STEVE's hand puppets pops up suddenly.)
STEVE: (PUPPET VOICE) I'll get it out!
JAYSON: No, no, I don't want that thing in my mouth again.
TRAVIS: Here's a spoon...
STEVE: (PUPPET) Aw, nobody wants me in the mouth...
SAM: (PUPPET VOICE) Look, I'm a talking beer glass...ehn I'm a li'l tipsy...
STEVE: (PUPPET) Say, Mr. Beer, would you like to get into my mouth?
SAM: (PUPPET) Sure, I'll try anything once...doesn't mean I'm gay, though...
STEVE: (PUPPET) No, you're just curious...
(STEVE and SAM perform a little scene on the table with beer and puppet, which is vaguely sexual. It is largely ignored, and the conversation continues in spite of it.)
SUE: Didn't they have a Pac Man cartoon?
TRAVIS: They had a Pac Man everything. Pac Man cartoons and pencil cases and ice cream bars and toothpaste and motorcycles-
NIALL: See, I wish they would do more of that stuff with Karl Marx.
LIL: When is your band playing again, Jayson?
JAYSON: That's a good question. Nick's been trying to get us a farewell show at The Rose.
SAM: Farewell show?
SUE: Are you breaking up the band?
JAYSON: No, far from it.
NIALL: Did you get signed?
JAYSON: Yeah.
SAM: Which one?
JAYSON: Epic.
SAM: No shit.
TRAVIS: Congratulations.
LIL: That's excellent, congratulations! When did this happen?
JAYSON: Yesterday afternoon.
NIALL: You've just been sitting on that info all this time. Sitting there like the Cheshire Cat.
JAYSON: I had to digest it, and then I was obliged to celebrate with the band.
SUE: So what does that mean? What do you have to do?
JAYSON: It basically means that we have to relocate for awhile.
SUE: Where to? Toronto?
JAYSON: Los Angeles.
SAM: Oh geez, tough break.
STEVE: This is incredible. Congratulations.
JAYSON: Thank you. It's really luck of the draw. The right time, the right place.

SAM: I don't think so. You guys rock! It was only a matter of time.
NIALL: Well way to fucking go.
(A barrage of congrats and handshaking ensues. TIFFANY is the only one somewhat restrained.)
TIFFANY: So is anybody gonna buy my Atari, or what?

X X X X

For Whom The Bell Tolls

(A table, a kitchen timer. TIFFANY and TRAVIS stare at it.)

TRAVIS: You could have done this yourself.
TIFFANY: I wanted a medical opinion. You're almost a doctor.
TRAVIS: You pee in a cup, put the tester in the pee, and fifteen minutes later the indicator reads plus or minus. You don't need medical training for that.
TIFFANY: I just want to make sure this is done right. I always do poorly on tests.
TRAVIS: Does Matt know that you might be pregnant?
TIFFANY: We're not exactly talking right now.
TRAVIS: You're going to have to tell him if the test-
TIFFANY: Can we talk about something else for a few minutes?
TRAVIS: Like what?
TIFFANY: Anything. I just want to pretend for a few minutes that this is all normal, and I'm not staring at an egg timer waiting to see how my life turns out.
TRAVIS: Sure. Uh, this is a nice apartment in spite of it being a basement. You've made it very homey.
TIFFANY: It's the same as it was the last time you were here.
TRAVIS: I've never been here before.
TIFFANY: You've been here before.
TRAVIS: No I haven't.
TIFFANY: Sure you have.
TRAVIS: No, this is the first time.
TIFFANY: No it isn't.
TRAVIS: Yes it is.
TIFFANY: We've known each other for over a year. How could this be the first time you've been in my apartment?
TRAVIS: I've never been here before.
TIFFANY: Why is that?
TRAVIS: We're really just acquaintances. We're the "friends of friends" that everybody talks about. I'm a friend of a friend of yours.
TIFFANY: Oh.
TRAVIS: We don't dislike each other. We just never really talked.
TIFFANY: We don't have a lot in common.
TRAVIS: No. But that doesn't mean we can't be friends.
TIFFANY: You can be friends without shared interests or talking.
TRAVIS: Right. Although we're talking right now.
TIFFANY: We are.
TRAVIS: How is it?
TIFFANY: Not so good. God, I need a cigarette.
TRAVIS: You better not. Just in case.
TIFFANY: I've been smoking all month! Is that really bad? I don't even know if it exists yet, and already I've screwed it up. It's going to be dumb, or colour blind or left-handed or something.

TRAVIS: Try to relax.
TIFFANY: How can I relax? My whole future is about to be determined by whether my piss is positive or negative! It's like some horrible game show! How am I supposed to relax?
TRAVIS: There must be something that relaxes you.
TIFFANY: Yeah, alcohol and nicotine! What do you think I--
(The egg timer dings.)
TRAVIS: I'll go check it.
(TRAVIS exits.)
TIFFANY: God? Even though I don't believe in you, please help me. I know it's supposed to be a blessing and all, but I just couldn't handle this right now.
(TRAVIS returns with the test.)
TRAVIS: It's positive.
TIFFANY: This is why I don't go to church!
TRAVIS: Okay, calm down--
TIFFANY: How does He expect me to ever believe in Him if he's not going to throw a miracle or two my way? Jesus fucking Christ! What have I ever done to him?
TRAVIS: Try to calm down. We have to think rationally.
TIFFANY: I'm a mother! I can't be rational anymore. I'm not ready! I don't have a job, a boyfriend, or cable. How can I have a baby? You can't tell anyone about this until I figure out what to do. Promise you won't.
TRAVIS: I won't.
TIFFANY: I am so screwed. What am I supposed to do? I've never been accidentally knocked up before.
TRAVIS: The first thing you need to do is get to a doctor and have a proper test done.
TIFFANY: That's right, the test could be wrong. Maybe I'm not pregnant! Could the test be wrong?
It could be wrong, right?
TRAVIS: It's never wrong. But you should have a doctor do it anyways. Then you should have a complete physical, and they'll set you up with an obstetrician.
TIFFANY: I'm going to be a mother. I'm going to be a mother.
TRAVIS: I'm...so sorry?
TIFFANY: No, no, no. It happened for a reason, right? Having a baby is a good thing. You're supposed to be happy. I've heard glowing is involved.
TRAVIS: Do you have a family doctor?
TIFFANY: Do you know any doctors who do abortions? Just to talk to, I'm not saying I'm going to-you know-just to, you know--
TRAVIS: I know, I'll make some calls.

(TIFFANY picks up the egg timer.)

TIFFANY: This never would have happened if I'd used this thing to time my eggs.

X X X X

So. L.A.

(SAM, JAYSON, and some beer.)

SAM: So. L.A.

JAYSON: L.A.

SAM: You ready for that?

JAYSON: I'm about as ready as I'll ever be. I don't know.

SAM: You're not convinced?

JAYSON: Well, it's not like I'm going to get another crack at it any time soon. I don't know. There's a part

of me that tells me it's a big mistake.

SAM: In what way?

JAYSON: Well, I don't really like the music. I just keep my mouth shut most of the time.

SAM: You guys rock, though, seriously.

JAYSON: That's the idea, I guess. The kids seem to like it. My interest is waning. I don't think we rock all that seriously. We're an odd match. I'd rather be doing something more bluesy.

SAM: So...what are you going to do?

JAYSON: Oh, I'm gonna go. Maybe it'll get more interesting. What else am I going to do? Stay here and rot?

SAM: This town ain't so bad. I'm staying. I'm not rotting.

JAYSON: Well, you're doing great. Great job, great place. You seem content. I've been in a serious rut.

SAM: Well, let me know if you need a roadie when you get down there.

JAYSON: I wish everyone could come with me.

SAM: I want you to go. But I don't want you to go, at the same time. You know what I mean?

JAYSON: I'm sure I'll be back once in a while.

SAM: Yeah. If you don't mind mixing with the peons.

JAYSON: I'll always be a peon. There's no guarantee that this'll work out anyway.

SAM: Quit with that shit, already. L.A., man. L.A.!

JAYSON: The city itself has no appeal for me. You have to drive everywhere. They built it on a major fucking fault line. And I'm dreading the climate. I'm designed for a temperate climate.

SAM: So why do you have to go out there anyway? Can't they just release your record from wherever?

JAYSON: They figure we're an American market product. They've got all this promotional shit lined up right away. We're recording there, and they're throwing us on this big-ass tour with some of their other groups. We're going to be active for a whole year.

SAM: Holy shit. That's gigantic.

JAYSON: They're spending a lot of money on us.

SAM: You're gonna justify that.

JAYSON: Yeah. Thanks for the continual barrage of encouragement.

SAM: Hey, I'm here for you man. I wish you weren't going, but you're going and I'm really happy for you.

(JAYSON nods his head. Silence.)

SAM: When are you leaving?

JAYSON: Two weeks.

SAM: Pretty soon.

JAYSON: Yeah.

SAM: Wow.

JAYSON: Yeah.

(Silence. SAM is dying to talk, but he doesn't know what to say.)

JAYSON: I'm gonna miss you too, Sam. Very much.

SAM: Aw, fuck.

JAYSON: C'mon, let's go get tanked. This is getting maudlin.

SAM: Right on.

X X X X

Baby Talk

(A table, notebooks. SUE is marking students' work. STEVE enters in clownish attire.)

STEVE: Fuck, what a day.

SUE: Rough time?
STEVE: They didn't get the Sylvia Plath joke.
SUE: That surprises you?
STEVE: Yes that surprises me. It was crystal clear and not one of them laughed.
SUE: And this was a birthday party for-what. A six-year old?
STEVE: Doesn't it bother you that the six year olds of this country have never heard of The Bell Jar?
SUE: No.
STEVE: It bothers me. In fact it scares me. What the hell is the use of our education system if kids aren't being taught Plath and her contemporaries? It sucks, plain and simple.
SUE: Watch it.
STEVE: I'm not saying it's the teachers' fault. No, it's definitely not the teachers' fault. You're all doing an incredible job despite all these cutbacks and political intrusions.
SUE: Go on.
STEVE: It's a wonder that teachers like you stay so motivated and inspiring. Kids are lucky to have someone of your calibre teaching them. It that enough sucking up?
SUE: Almost. I'll let you know.
STEVE: It just bugs me, that's all.
SUE: So drop the Plath and go back to the rubber poop bit. Scat's always a big hit with the kids.
STEVE: I can't drop Plath for poop.
SUE: Why not?
STEVE: That would be giving in. I've got to maintain some artistic principles.
SUE: Fine. Just don't complain to me when they don't get it. It's your turn to make dinner.
STEVE: That's fine, I don't mind take-out. Let me get changed.
(STEVE exits.)
SUE: Guess what I did today? I went with Tiffany to her first doctor's appointment. She's really freaking out. She didn't want to be alone so I went in with her. It was really weird being in the waiting room surrounded by all these pregnant people. I was the only woman there not having a baby. Her doctor is really attractive. He's older, but still...It'd be weird having someone that good-looking messing around down there.
STEVE: (OFF) Thanks.
SUE: You know what I mean. I can't believe that Tiffany is going to be the first one of us to have a baby. She didn't even know she should be taking folic acid. How could you not know that? I always figured it would be me. Us. I always pictured myself with kids. Not a lot-three or four. I've read all the books, taken all the classes. I know what I'm doing. I'm ready. But Tiff is having the baby. I shouldn't be like this. She's my friend. I should be more supportive. She needs my help. I wonder how she feels. How does it feel to have a baby growing inside you? Can you feel it breathing? Do you know when it's dreaming? Do they dream in there? I'd be a great mother. Maybe it's time. Maybe it's time the two of us made a child. What do you think?
(STEVE enters.)
STEVE: Do you want pizza or Chinese?
SUE: How come someone as messed up as Tiffany is having a baby when there's so many other women out there who want one but can't?
STEVE: I don't know. Who knows if she'll even keep it. How about Chinese?
SUE: Yeah, I think they're only allowed to have one baby.
STEVE: ...food.
SUE: Oh. Whatever.
STEVE: Or...why don't we skip dinner and go straight to bed?
SUE: Steve...
STEVE: You know how I get after a full day of birthday parties.
SUE: I have to mark all these workbooks.

STEVE: I can help you with that. After. What do you say?
 (STEVE enticingly pulls a never-ending string of condoms out of his pocket. They just keep going and going.)
 SUE: I don't want to be up all night doing this.
 STEVE: I can bring the puppets.
 SUE: Okay. Um, you know what might be nice? Maybe we could skip the birth control tonight.
 STEVE: How would that be nice?
 SUE: I love you. You love me. Maybe it's time we took the next step.
 STEVE: And had a baby? I can think of one or two steps before that.
 SUE: I've already taken them.
 STEVE: Do we have to talk about making babies? I'm horny.
 SUE: I'm ready.
 STEVE: I'm not.
 SUE: You love kids. You're great with kids.
 STEVE: Other people's kids. I'm just not at a point where I'm ready to have one of my own.
 SUE: When will you be?
 STEVE: I don't know.
 SUE: A year from now? Five years? Never?
 STEVE: Yes. Any of those.
 SUE: What's wrong with us? Couples are supposed to want a family. That's the whole point. That's the biological urge. To propagate the species.
 STEVE: There's nothing wrong with us.
 SUE: There is. Don't you feel it? We've been doing the same thing over and over again. We need a change.
 STEVE: You think a baby will do that?
 SUE: It would represent growth and love-everything a relationship needs. Everything we need.
 (SUE moves behind STEVE, softening her voice.)
 SUE: Close your eyes. Do it. You're coming home after a long day of performing. You've gone from one hectic party to another all day long, and you're just happy you're finally home. You're exhausted. You open the door. Inside, there on the couch, nestled in my arms, is your beautiful baby. She looks up at you with big blue eyes and smiles at you with a love like no other in the world. Can you imagine how that feels?
 (STEVE opens his eyes, and looks terrified.)

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I Need Your Advice

(A table. Menus, breadbasket. SAM is sitting. LIL arrives.)

LIL: Hello, Sammy.
 SAM: Hello, Lilly. How you doing?
 LIL: I'm good, thanks, what have you been up to?
 SAM: I'm off today, so I thought I'd have lunch with you and then get started on some beer drinking.
 LIL: Thanks for meeting with me. I always feel so, well, it's easy to talk to you.
 SAM: Yeah, well, you know me.
 LIL: I need your advice.
 SAM: Oh yeah?
 LIL: I think I'm going to go to Los Angeles.
 SAM: Los Angeles.
 LIL: That's right.
 SAM: Los Angeles.
 LIL: Los Angeles.

SAM: Haven't you already been to Los Angeles?

LIL: Yeah...I didn't do it right. I wasn't expecting-I just didn't consider how hard it would be. I wasn't prepared for it. But I am now. I think. I could go down with Jayson. At least then I'd know somebody. You know? But I'm not one hundred percent sure yet.

SAM: Well, that's okay. Give it some time. Think about it.

(SAM buries himself in a menu.)

LIL: Sam?

SAM: Yes?

LIL: What do you think I should do?

SAM: What do I think you should do? I don't know what to say. I don't know what to tell you. Why do you think...you want to go...this time?

LIL: That's the thing. I don't really know. I think I'm ready for it now. I've been stagnating here.

SAM: What do you mean? You're working. You had that audition yesterday, how did that go?

LIL: It was weird.

SAM: Why? What happened?

LIL: Well, I went in and got up on stage, like all the other times I've done this and before I begin, I'm standing there, psyching myself up. I'm off in my own world. And then I sort of "come to" because I hear my name being called. I say, "I'm Lil, and I'm reading for the part of Margaret." So, I start into my piece, and it's going well-I've done the piece a hundred times. Some people hate auditions but I really like the rush-anyway, it's going well and then, all of a sudden, the director stops me, in the middle of a sentence...

SAM: Is that bad?

LIL: Well, yeah. I mean, they'll do that in L.A., but they don't tend to stop you in the middle of your piece around here. So, I'm like, "What the hell, buddy?"

SAM: Did you actually say that?

LIL: No, to myself. And he says...

(SAM assumes the role of the casting director. LIL is onstage.)

DIRECTOR: Lil, your reading is great...you've got a terrific C.V. and you actually come highly recommended to us. If you don't mind, I'd like to try something a little different. I don't know how much you know about the way I approach my productions, but there is a significant amount of improvisation that goes on in the workshop process. So, the cast chemistry is very important. Maybe you could help me get to know you a little better.

LIL: Sure, sure. What would you like to know?

DIRECTOR: Just tell us a little bit about yourself.

LIL: Okay...I've been acting professionally for three and a half years. I grew up just outside of town...I always wanted to be an actor since I was very small. I used to put on plays for my family.

DIRECTOR: What do you get out of acting? Why does it appeal to you?

LIL: I think I just enjoy the opportunity to pretend to be someone else. I could be a thousand different people. When you can do that, you can cut through some of the ugliness in the world...you can see things from other people's perspective, feel their particular sadness, or emptiness, or happiness. And then you can translate that for others, and let them know that they're not alone in the world, that other people feel the same.

DIRECTOR: And what does that ability do for you?

LIL: Well...I don't know. It gives me something to do. No, that's not quite right. I'm not sure, really. I just know it's something I have to do.

DIRECTOR: I see you've taken your talents south of the border.

LIL: I spent a little time in Los Angeles.

DIRECTOR: How was that?

LIL: Oh, not great. I went out to L.A. to see what it was all about. I know lots of people have the same idea, but I thought I would be able to get some work fairly quickly. It was tough. I really thought that I could

make a go out there. I figured that I had an advantage because I was really an actor with training and loads of stage experience. I figured I'd be a few steps ahead of the pack. But there were so many of us showing up at these auditions...and so many of them were stunning magazine cover girls. It made me so angry-those girls, with no acting under their belt, were being ogled by the casting people. They didn't care about talent and experience and effort. They didn't care about my tenure at Stratford. They were looking for the look. I had worked hard all these years...and I was passed over every time for the pin-up girls. It made me crazy. I would go back to the little hole I was living in. And wait.

DIRECTOR: So what did you do?

LIL: There came a point where I just couldn't take anymore, so I came home.

DIRECTOR: How did that make you feel?

LIL: I was on the plane, and I was thinking about what everyone was going to say and think when I showed up at all the old hangouts. I guess I was trying to prepare myself for humiliation. Everyone was really good about it, for the most part. Some people did take some shots at me. Comments and looks and talking behind their hands. For a while there, I was actually pretty low...I got very low. I was ready to give it up.

DIRECTOR: And yet here you are.

LIL: Here I am.

DIRECTOR: How did you get past it?

LIL: I, uh...I had a little help from a friend, I guess.

DIRECTOR: A friend. A man? A woman?

LIL: A man.

DIRECTOR: Describe your relationship for me.

LIL: ...what exactly would you like to know about it?

DIRECTOR: How did this man help you?

LIL: Hm. Well. He was someone I had known for a long time but never really thought of other than in a casual way, you know? He just appeared, like he knew I was so far down, and he said all these things to me, like he knew what I was going through and he'd been there. He took care of things for me. Did the things that needed to be done, but did them quietly and never looked for a thank you or anything. He just went about putting things in order. He made me feel confident again and I fell in love with him. He took me in and he listened, he held me, and didn't demand anything in return. The more he cared and listened and did, the more I wanted to be taken care of.

DIRECTOR: Are you still with this man?

LIL: Yes.

DIRECTOR: And is it still the same?

LIL: Yes. Only now...I feel better. In myself. About myself. I don't have anymore to say about that time. I want to do things for myself.

DIRECTOR: You understand that, if we take you into the cast here, there won't be much time for a relationship. Would you and your friend be alright with that for a few months?

LIL: I would be fine with that.

DIRECTOR: Good, good. Well, thank you for sharing with us, Lil, it was a pleasure meeting you. Is there anything else you think we should know before we end the interview?

LIL: I just want you to know that I'm perfectly confident in my abilities. I've had a good time speaking with you. I'd love to join your company.

DIRECTOR: Well, we'd love to have you, Lil. My production assistant will be giving you a call.

LIL: Thank you.

(Back in the restaurant with SAM.)

SAM: Did you get the part?

LIL: Yeah.

SAM: But you'd rather go to L.A.

LIL: Maybe. I ate at Jade Gardens the other night, and I get the fortune cookie, right? Guess what it said.

SAM: "Help, I'm being held prisoner in a fortune cookie factory."

LIL: It said, "All your hard work will pay off." It made me sit up and take notice. I guess I never thought of it that way. I've been thinking of myself as...a failure. But, what if I look at my experience in L.A. as a part of my training? As a coming-of-age ritual. If I go back, I would be getting back up on that horse. Only this time I'd know how to ride it.

SAM: You'd also be starting from scratch. You work a lot for an actor, right? You've built a pretty good name for yourself here. I love your work.

LIL: You come to see every show.

SAM: I think it's nifty, what you do. We don't have a lot of good actors around here. I always know if you're in the show, I'm gonna have a good time.

LIL: Thanks.

SAM: If you go to L.A., you'll have to leave all your friends behind and we couldn't come see your shows.

LIL: You'll see me in the movies.

SAM: What's Niall going to be doing while you're acting in L.A.?

LIL: I suppose he'll be acting like he doesn't care.

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Communist Ethic Vs. Employment

(NIALL in shop, a table, Communist books, paraphernalia. TIFFANY enters.)

NIALL: Tiffany.

TIFFANY: Hi, comrade.

NIALL: Haven't seen you around here in a while.

TIFFANY: I was in the neighbourhood. How's biz?

NIALL: Excellent. A bit of a boost after that band came through town a couple of weeks ago.

TIFFANY: The Ho Chi Minhs.

NIALL: Yeah. They were projecting videos of Che Guevera and his ilk, and they had info booths set up, the whole nine yards. So now the kids are wondering, "Hey, what's all this Communism stuff about, anyway?" and they've discovered the only store in town that sells the stuff, and that's that. So, uh, I heard the news.

TIFFANY: The news.

NIALL: About your being pregnant. Congratulations.

TIFFANY: Well, thanks. It was pretty easy, actually. There's a reason I came by.

NIALL: You need a job.

TIFFANY: Even just a few shifts, anything will do. I'd really, really appreciate it.

NIALL: This is going against a number of the voices in my head, but...alright. I'll think about a couple of shifts here and there.

TIFFANY: Oh, thanks. Thanks. That's great.

NIALL: But Tiff?

TIFFANY: Yeah?

NIALL: You know.

TIFFANY: What.

NIALL: You know what I'm going to say.

TIFFANY: No, I don't...

NIALL: I'm talking about the last time you worked for me...and it wasn't pleasant-for the customers or for me.

TIFFANY: But-

NIALL: No buts. This is a business. Bottom line.

TIFFANY: This is a communist bookstore, a haven for leftist ideology, a home for alternative viewpoints, therefore a place for debate. Am I right?

NIALL: ...technically, you're right. But what philosophy are you expounding when you tell my customers

that they are "shallow armchair rebel wanna-be's who are total idiots if they think they can buy communism?"

TIFFANY: It sparked a debate, didn't it?

NIALL: It almost came to blows and it cost me a sale. Probably many sales.

TIFFANY: Okay, don't get me wrong, and I still want to work here, but Engels and Marx and Lenin and the rest of them must be spinning so fast their graves are on fire. This store is the antithesis of everything they stood for. You are actually selling and profiting from ideas that were designed to help empower the dispossessed and impoverished by providing for equal distribution of wealth. You're selling those ideas to put yourself ahead of others-not to help lift up those underneath you. So selling these t-shirts and books and buttons and posters and drink trays with the six Stalin tumblers included and the limited edition Christmas tree ornaments is selling the oppressed their own oppression. Or you're just providing cutsey conversation pieces for the well-heeled oppressors. Either way it's fucked.

NIALL: Are you finished, comrade? May I speak to the Duma in my own defense? "My fellow Bolsheviks..." It's all a load of crap. It is. What you're talking about is pub talk-something for academics to debate about over a few pints at the grad lounge. But it's not real. Between you and me-and I'll deny this at my trial-aside from the teens, the people, the "adults" who buy this stuff are the real charlatans. They're only passionate about it until it conflicts with their Thursday night sitcom. And check this out: they'll forget it all a week after they graduate. Why? Because it sounds great but it's not real life. And they wake up to that pretty damn quick or the world leaves them behind. But for now, they're happy to preach and rage and protest from the top of daddy's new Lexus. It's bullshit. You know it, I know it, even they know it. But it's not my place to tell them and neither is it yours. Who are we to judge? What they're doing is all part of the college experience-try on different philosophies until one fits. Maybe we should congratulate them for taking a risk in the first place. In that light, I'm doing them a service. I'm no villain. I have embraced the paradox of life. I have jumped feet first into the murky grey sea that makes up ninety percent of life's experiences. Things are black and white so rarely, and thank God for that. But did you know that I have to defend my store on a fairly regular basis? I do, and from attacks coming from all sides-the right, the left, above, below...so I must believe in some of this stuff. But I won't lie to you and tell you I'm not thrilled with the chumps who buy this stuff because I am. They're paying my bills and a little more besides. What's wrong with that? It's interesting...you know what my biggest seller is for teenaged boys?

TIFFANY: The communist pin-up girl calendar? Or those pens that when you turn it upside down, the Bolshevik babe's bikini disappears?

NIALL: No. But those aren't bad ideas...no. I'm talking about the re-issued hockey jerseys from the 1972 World Cup, solid red with the CCCP on the front. I'm making a fortune off those.

TIFFANY: There are more important things than money. Like integrity.

NIALL: Which is why you've come asking me for a job. Don't sweat it. What did Lenin say? "It's impossible for anyone to believe in a philosophy when their belly is empty." Or something like that.

TIFFANY: Oh my god. You're quoting Lenin to defend your money making.

NIALL: This is all a rather lengthy digression from our original discussion. The original proposal still stands before the Duma. Comrade Tiffany is invited to work here amidst these pillars of modern thought-Marx, Lenin, Mao-provided she...

TIFFANY: ...keeps her politics to herself and just helps sell stuff.

NIALL: Pardon?

TIFFANY: Keeps her integrity to herself and just helps sell stuff.

NIALL: Well said, comrade. Tiffany, you're a really intelligent person. You've got a good head on your shoulders. Have you thought about pursuing some kind of managing position? Or owning a franchise, even? I'm thinking of franchising.

TIFFANY: Oh my god.

X X X X

Are You From Tennessee?

(LIL at a table, with a drink. TIFFANY and SUE enter from opposite sides.)

SUE: Hey! Synchronized entrances.

LIL: Hi gals. How are you?

SUE: Good, how are you? You look nice.

LIL: Thanks.

TIFF: I got a story for you.

SUE: Is it dirty?

LIL: Tell it. But then I want to tell you something.

SUE: How's the baby, Tiff?

TIFFANY:

What? The baby is gestating. Let me tell you this story. So I went to The Bluenose last night-

LIL: What? Why?

SUE: What's The Bluenose? It's hard to keep up with you guys-

LIL: You know the Bluenose. It's the worst meat market in the city.

SUE: I wonder why I haven't heard of it...you went to a bar?

TIFF: Anyway, I got roped into going into this place, and you know me, my sensors are on red alert. I'm barely in the door five minutes-

LIL: Don't tell me.

SUE: What? Did you hurt yourself?

TIFFANY: Sensors, bee bee bee beep--drunken jock at six o'clock.

LIL: And three o'clock, and twelve o'clock, and two o'clock-

SUE: How late does this place stay open?

TIFFANY: He walks right up to me, and pretends to bump into me, you know, the usual creative stuff. Like I didn't notice him and his friends drooling over me as soon as I walked in. So I give him the curled-lip, lidded-eyes of death look. Like this. But he's too toasted to even notice. Then he comes out with this fuckin' line. Are you ready for this?

LIL: I don't know, am I?

TIFFANY: He says, "are you from Tennessee?" So I just keep my disgusted face on.

And he says, "'Cause baby, you're the only ten I see." I nearly fell over and I'm not sure if it was because I was laughing so hard or because I was horrified that he thought it might actually work.

LIL: My god.

SUE: Wasn't it smoky in there?

TIFFANY: And his chums are like, six feet behind him, and he turns back to them and they encourage him to keep going while they try to contain their laughter. So he turns around to deliver the coup de gras-and I quote-"Want to come back and see my hard drive baby? I promise it ain't three and a half inches-and it sure as hell ain't floppy!"

SUE: Oh my god. This place sounds a little dangerous.

LIL: I never hear these lines. You get all the good lines.

TIFFANY: It's a curse. What were you saying, Sue?

SUE: Nothing. Didn't you have something you wanted to talk about?

LIL: Yes. Tell me what you think about this. I'm thinking of going to L.A. with Jayson.

TIFFANY: What?

SUE: L.A., really? Wow.

LIL: I just think I want to give it another shot, maybe, you know?

SUE: Why all of a sudden?

LIL: Well Jayson going gives me an opportunity to go. Someone to go with. It's also kind of a kick in the pants. You know, he's going for it, why shouldn't I.

TIFFANY: Why the hell would you do that?

LIL: Because...the opportunity has presented itself.

TIFFANY: Why now? You can go anytime you want.

SUE: What about your acting here? Your life here. I heard Niall was going to be opening up another store-

LIL: It doesn't have anything to do with Niall. And I'm only just thinking about it. This is a good career choice for me. I'm ready to try the big time again, and to do that I have to go to L.A.

TIFFANY: Why do you have to go to L.A.

LIL: Well...I feel stifled here, like I'm trapped. Everybody in the circuit here knows everything about me before I even show up to the first rehearsal. It's too close. I feel like I can't breathe. Like I'm being smothered.

SUE: Gee, thanks.

LIL: Not you-I'm talking about the people I work with.

SUE: But you told me success for actors comes when you know a whole network of people. "It's who you know" and all that. You've got that here already.

LIL: Yeah, well, they're not going to be filming "Titanic Two" in this one-horse town, you know what I'm saying?

SUE: So, when's your baby due?

TIFFANY: April first. It's fitting.

SUE: I think it's so great. Wow. The first baby.

TIFFANY: Yeah, first baby. My last baby, too.

SUE: I mean it's the first baby in the group.

TIFFANY: We should have had bets going.

SUE: You're totally glowing. Isn't she glowing?

LIL: Yeah.

TIFFANY: It's not enough that I'm pregnant, now I'm radioactive.

SUE: I can't wait to have kids.

TIFFANY: You're surrounded by the little fuckers every day. Don't you get sick of them?

SUE: It's different when it's kids of your own. I don't know, my dad told me it's different. They're your own flesh and blood.

TIFFANY: So why don't you have a baby, then.

SUE: Steve's not into it. He's been acting weird lately. Like he's...unfulfilled.

I keep telling him, "I know just the thing to cure that..." and he's pretty sick of hearing it. This morning he stormed out of the house in a way you wouldn't expect from a man in full clown regalia. Sometimes I wonder what we're doing together. We're so different.

TIFFANY: You are different. You're very different. You're all cribs and cradles and he's all pratfalls and rubber dog shit. But he's just sorting stuff out.

LIL: He just needs some time to get his head around the idea.

SUE: He's going to try to get the old act back together with Travis but I told him, Travis is in medical school. He doesn't have time to juggle.

TIFFANY: Christ, you sound like a bitty old wife already. Let him try.

SUE: He's going to be a pediatrician, isn't he? Now there's a job where you really have to like kids.

TIFFANY: Who are you talking about?

SUE: I don't think I ever congratulated you on being blessed with the beautiful, wonderful gift of having a child. What a special time for you and your husband-to-be.

TIFFANY: You know I don't have a husband-to-be and furthermore, I'm not planning on having a husband-to-be, ever.

SUE: Well, you just never know.

TIFFANY: Oh, I know.

SUE: Still, it will be neat for you, this change of life, settling down, becoming responsible for another human being. If you need any help at all with getting things started, you just let me know.

TIFFANY: Getting things started? What the hell are you talking about? I don't need that cutesy house and picket fence bullshit and some guy bringing home the bacon and Mars bars for the kids on Fridays "cause it's the weekend!" My life is fine the way it is.

SUE: All I'm saying is, you're very fortunate to be having this baby. I only want everything to be alright for you and your baby. I see the results of all kinds of parenting, you know. Everybody's circumstances are different, but some of these kids are really hurting. Sometimes it's circumstance, but sometimes it's because of bad parenting.

TIFFANY: I'm not going to be a bad parent.

SUE: I know, I know! Just listen for a second. I'm not saying that I think you're going to be a bad mother. It's just that sometimes it's hard for people to imagine how much time and effort and money it takes to raise a child. Some of my kids are malnourished, underslept, and have precious few social skills. They can't get along with the others, they're unfocussed, they're tired. And they can't learn. And I meet the parents, or more often than not, just the mother. And it all makes sense. We're breeding a lost generation, right now.

LIL: She's going to be okay, Sue.

SUE: I know.

TIFFANY: You don't really know me very well.

SUE: I don't know anybody very well. It's just...people blame the education system for the bad test scores and the illiteracy, but that's not even half of it. Children are raising themselves these days, and they don't know what they're doing.

TIFFANY: If I'm going to have this baby, it's going to be a rocket scientist, or there's no sense in having it. No guitar-strumming dickheads for this mother.

SUE: Speaking of guitar-strumming dickheads-so you're going to L.A.

LIL: I don't know.

X X X X

Savvy

(NIALL and STEVE, drinks in hand.)

NIALL: You know you're going about this all wrong.

STEVE: Drinking?

NIALL: No, this children's entertaining thing.

STEVE: You mean my life's work? This thing that I've devoted all of my creative energy and thought into for the last eight years?

NIALL: Yeah. You're doing it wrong.

STEVE: Thanks for letting me know. I better go tell the kids their parties are cancelled.

NIALL: No, just hear me out.

STEVE: You don't know dick about this business.

NIALL: Ah, but I do know business. You can't spend you life fighting capitalism without picking up a few practical business tips.

STEVE: That's twisted.

NIALL: Do you know how hard it is to keep a Communist bookstore afloat in this day and age? Kids today don't want to hear about the suppression of the working class. If it's not in a video game, it's not worth thinking about. But the shop is still there. In fact, it's doing better than ever.

STEVE: How have you managed that? It's a crime against nature, somehow.

NIALL: I figured out how to make all those dusty copies of Marx and Lenin relevant and hip again.

STEVE: How.

NIALL: Retro-Communism.

STEVE: That's pathetic.

NIALL: The old Cold War stuff is hot! I bought a bunch of cheap, second hand T-shirts with Cold War slogans on them, quadrupled the price, and they're making me a fortune.

STEVE: That's not terribly socialist.
 NIAL: Maybe not, but I can help you. I can share my business savvy with you free of charge. That's socialist.
 STEVE: Lay it on me.
 NIAL: Stop doing kids' parties.
 STEVE: I do 270 kids' parties a year. That's how I make a living.
 NIAL: Maybe now, but what about five years from now? Kids are slowly being weaned off social interaction and are now being raised by television and video games. The concept of a live performance is completely alien to them. They don't want to be entertained, they want to be virtually entertained. You can't survive in a market like that.
 STEVE: I can if I change the act so that they get to control me like a video game.
 NIAL: I don't think you want to go there.
 STEVE: So what's the solution?
 NIAL: Geriatrics.
 (A long pause.)
 STEVE: The blank stare indicates a lack of understanding.
 NIAL: Old people. There's a shit load of them, and they're making more everyday. These people are starved for any kind of diversion. Plus, they remember live performances. Quite frankly, they're just happy if anyone pays attention to them.
 STEVE: Old people?
 NIAL: Geriatric entertainment.
 STEVE: A Geriatric entertainer.
 NIAL: Seniors entertainer.
 STEVE: Geezer entertainer.
 NIAL: Golden entertainer.
 STEVE: Golden entertainer!
 NIAL: All you have to do is tap into the old folks homes and the social clubs. Virgin territory.
 STEVE: I'd have to change the act.
 NIAL: Not much. They won't be able to hear you anyway.
 STEVE: That's alright, except for the Sylvia Plath bit, it's mostly a lot of falling down. Golden entertainer...
 NIAL: Golden entertainer.

X X X X

I Like, Like You

(SAM and a mirror. SAM is rehearsing an approach.)

SAM: Hey, Tiff, how's it going? Tiffany...wow, you look fabulous. You look great. How's it hanging?

How's it going? Oh, hi Tiff, I was just thinking about you. What a coincidence. You look better in real life than you did in my-aw, fuck. Hey, Tiffany? Can I talk to you for a minute? No, no, I'm fine. I'm great. Well. I'm not so great. I got something on my mind...what is it? Well...it's you. I've been thinking about you day and night for a really long time. It's getting so that I can't sleep or eat...am I a big pathetic loser, or what?

SAM: (CONTINUED)

Hey, Tiffany, how you doing? You look good. Is that new? No, not the baby, the shirt-

Hey, Tiffany, how you doing? You look good. Is that new? It's beautiful. It suits you. I've always admired your fashion sense. In fact, I've always admired everything about you. You're a wonderful girl. You make me happy. You make me laugh. What are doing Friday? You want to go out for a beer or something? Yeah,

sure, we'll call the whole gang. Hi, Tiff how are you? You look great. How is everything? It's interesting how we never take the time to just chat anymore. I've been missing that. Well, you're great to talk to. What are you doing this weekend? Maybe we could hook up. Oh, that's okay, I understand. Maybe some other time, when you're not stuffing envelopes.

Tiffany. Can I talk to you? It's nothing serious...well, that depends on what you view as serious. I've been giving it a lot of serious thought. I just got to get something off my chest, something I been feeling for a long time. I don't mean to creep you out or anything, and I don't want this to screw anything up for us, but...I just wanted to say that I like you. A lot. I mean, I like, like you. You know? Because of...everything about you. I just felt like I needed to say it, and if you don't feel that, that's okay, that's great, no hard feelings, I just needed to get it out of the way. 'Cause my heart pounds every time I'm near you. Every time I smell you or hear you talk or even hear somebody talking about you. I'm not trying to be all creepy or anything. I just like you.

I think you're amazing. You make me happy. You make me laugh. You're funny and interesting. And you're beautiful.

I love you. I'm in love with you.

X X X X

A Medical Opinion

(A bus stop. TRAVIS, LIL.)

LIL: I'm thinking about going out there with him.

TRAVIS: You want to go to Los Angeles?

LIL: I think so...I was out there before, I got some film work, but it never really went anywhere. I think I just let it slip. If I'd been more diligent I could have made more out of it. I just got really lonely and frustrated, so I came back.

TRAVIS: So you want to take another stab at it.

LIL: Well there's nothing going on around here. I'm doing shows, but I feel like I'm wasting my life away. I'm not learning anything. I think I could do it this time. I could probably get my old agent again. Plus, if I went down with Jayson I'd have somebody there that I know, you know? Somebody to hang out with, you know, talk biz, that sort of thing.

TRAVIS: You're thinking you're going to move in with him?

LIL: Well, I don't know about that, we haven't talked about that yet. I'm just talking about going down there with him.

TRAVIS: Hm.

LIL: But I don't know.

TRAVIS: Hm.

LIL: What do you think.

TRAVIS: Oh, sounds great. Could be fun.

LIL: Yeah. It could be. I think, I'm a little older now, I'm more experienced. I'm better equipped. It could be fun.

TRAVIS: Sure. Or it could be exactly the same as last time.

LIL: You think so?

TRAVIS: Well, if you think that going down with Jayson is going to make it better for you, then I think you're setting yourself up for some serious disappointment.

LIL: I'm not going to be with him, I just mean, like, he'll be there, like going down with a friend, you know? Somebody I can talk to and gang out with while I get my bearings.

TRAVIS: First of all, he's not going to be around all that much when you get down there. He's going to

have commitments, he's going to have to tour, go to meetings, that sort of thing. And he'll be hanging out with the band, seeing the sights, living the life.. He's not going to have any time for you. Whereas you're going down to try to break into an industry that's already supersaturated, with the added weight of having already failed on your first attempt. So it might not be any fun at all.

LIL: Maybe.

TRAVIS: And what's going on with Niall? How does he feel about it?

LIL: Niall.

TRAVIS: The long distance thing is really hard to do.

LIL: Yes, I know.

TRAVIS: This is my bus. I gotta go to school. We can talk some more later, if you want.

LIL: Thanks. See you later.

TRAVIS: Don't do anything rash!

(TRAVIS exits. LIL yells after him.)

LIL: I thought you had a car!

X X X X

The Abyss Of Uncertainty

(JAYSON fiddling with guitar. STEVE is with him.)

JAYSON: I can't fucking believe she's pregnant.

STEVE: People get pregnant all the time.

JAYSON: What is it, some kind of plague?

STEVE: I don't know, I've been having some morning sickness...

JAYSON: The woman hasn't got one maternal instinct in her entire body. Or at least she didn't when I knew her. She's a freak, she's a big slob, she's kind of lazy. She can't even take care of a cat. I had to take the cat when we split up to ensure its survival. Hey, you want a cat?

STEVE: No.

JAYSON: I don't know what I'm going to do with her.

STEVE: Tiffany?

JAYSON: The cat. Can you picture it? "Oh-oh, baby's hungry again, maybe there's something left in that chip bag over there, ope, here's half a convenience store danish, that'll do."

STEVE: You're talking about the cat now.

JAYSON: Tiffany. I would come home, the place looks like ground zero...she'd go, "how was your day?" and I'd go, "Fine, I just worked eight hours, how was your day?" and she'd be like, "Well, there were some interesting developments on Days Of Our Lives, and I tipped over the cat box-I was going to clean it up, but it was making me sick...oh, and I accidentally tore the curtains down."

(STEVE is laughing.)

JAYSON: (CONTINUED) It's true, she ripped the curtains down one day. We had this superball that we would throw around for The Spaz, and it got caught between the wall and the curtain rod, so instead of getting a chair to reach it, she thought she'd climb up the fucking curtains.

(JAYSON is laughing now too.)

JAYSON: (CONTINUED) Fuck. What kind of a head is that?

STEVE: That's hilarious.

JAYSON: Yeah, it was. We laughed for hours after she told me that. And we never put 'em back up, either. And sometimes we would have sex right in front of the window, just to shock the community. I don't think anybody ever saw us, though, we were on the fourteenth floor. Jesus, Steve, I have been basically unhappy since we split. I think that was the best time of my life.

STEVE: Forget all that. You're going to L.A. Get your head out of your ass and get pumped, as they say.

JAYSON: Who's "they"?

STEVE: They who are them. This may sound...whatever, but, I admire you.

JAYSON: You admire me.

STEVE: I admire you.

JAYSON: Well, you could join my fan club. Just give my mom a call. She's got stacks of autographed photos.

STEVE: I'm serious.

JAYSON: Feeling alright, Steve?

STEVE: Shall I tell you why I admire you?

JAYSON: I'm all ears.

STEVE: I admire you because, in the immortal words of Henry David Thoreau, you are "jumping off the cliff of security and into the abyss of uncertainty."

JAYSON: Come again?

STEVE: You are jumping off the cliff of security.

JAYSON: The cliff of security.

STEVE: That's right.

JAYSON: Into...

STEVE: Into the abyss of uncertainty.

JAYSON: Is there a forest of doom and or a pit of evil at the bottom of the abyss of uncertainty?

STEVE: No. It's an abyss. It has no apparent bottom.

JAYSON: And that's a quote from Henry David who? Thorax?

STEVE: Thoreau. That's sort of what he said. But not really. The point is you're leaving the nest. You're taking a risk. That's admirable.

JAYSON: I'm just going to be playing in the same lame-ass rock band I always play with, except we'll be playing in Los Angeles. Where the beautiful people go to die.

STEVE: What have you been smoking?

JAYSON: Do you want some?

STEVE: You're going to L.A.! Think about that. Los Angeles, the City of Angels, the epicentre of modern culture. And let's remind ourselves why you are going: to record a record. To record an album of hit songs! I'd be shitting myself! How many people do you know who've gone to L.A. to do what you're doing?

(JAYSON silently counts them out on his hand.)

STEVE: The answer is none. None who will be doing it exactly the way you're doing it, anyway. So don't treat it like it's nothing.

JAYSON: My greatest hope for us is that when we end up in the bargain bin, we still cost more than The Jets. It's been done a million times over, so let's not get too excited about it.

STEVE: No, let's not get too mundane about it. Not only are you making the leap-you're doing it for art. That's what it's all about!

JAYSON: Here's the inside scoop on what you're calling art. First of all, I've been doing this way too long already. I don't know what the hell I think I'm doing. I'm just about ready to give the farewell performance. Rock music is the province of children. I'm ten years older than everybody else in the band, and it shows. I don't enjoy being around them. They don't know anything. They know a few chords, but that's about it. This group is

JAYSON: (CONTINUED) slated to be the next big thing for this record company, so they can't afford for anything to go wrong. That's where I fit in-a very experienced guitarist asked to play what might as well be Three Blind Mice. Do you see where I'm going, here? Nobody gives a shit about art. It's about market demographics and profit margins. It's selling your soul to the Devil for the opportunity to be embarrassed about it in later life.

STEVE: Well. At least your guitar playing will be art.

JAYSON: Once the producers get ahold of it, they'll chop it up and clean it up and digitize it and run it through a million fucking channels until there was no point in my even playing it. I'm getting a guitar tech when I get out there. You know what comes with the guitar tech? A new guitar. A brand new, sterile, pop-radio friendly guitar. Look at this piece of shit. Look at it! It's an uncooperative, prehistoric Taiwanese imitation of a Japanese imitation of hyper-exaggerated American craftsmanship. It makes my fingers bleed. And when I play it, I sound like a hardcore Delta bluesman on a forty-year whisky bender. I fucking love it. They're never gonna let me record with this thing in a billion years. That breaks my heart.

STEVE: Well if the whole deal turns you off, why are you going?

JAYSON: Thirty-five thousand bucks American, that's why I'm going. And therein lies the problem. The almighty, all-powerful dollar is making a whore out of me. I'm selling out. I'm a whore turning out whatever tricks any old executive John wants me to play. It's all so tired and boring. It ain't art, I'll tell you that much.

STEVE: Jesus, you make it sound so bleak.

JAYSON: The very word. Bleak. It's not some sit-around-the-table-with-your-herbal-tea-and-bandy-about-lofty-ideas-with-other-creative-types session.

STEVE: Could you repeat that for me?

JAYSON: It's a business trip. It is the furthest thing from art.

STEVE: So what are you going to do?

JAYSON: I'm going to go. This will never happen again, so I'm definitely going. I'm hoping my attitude will change.

STEVE: You're just experiencing a little anxiety. Staring off the cliff of security into the abyss of uncertainty.

JAYSON: Just, now and again over the last few days, I've had this little nagging feeling in my gut. I've been here for such a long time, it seems completely unnatural to leave it behind. Tiffany getting pregnant, totally stopped me in my tracks. It was like a freight train.

STEVE: In what way? Aw, Jesus, it's not yours, is it?

JAYSON: No, no, no, no. But it could have been. You know? So many possible pasts, possible futures. I have this uncanny ability to fuck everything up on a whim. I think I'm a little nervous that I might do that with the band. Just throw up my hands and say, "Fuck it, I'm joining that Led Zeppelin tribute band down the street."

STEVE: Whatever happens, happens.

JAYSON: Word, brother.

STEVE: And even though you've developed this corporate whore mindset, I still admire you.

JAYSON: Well thank you. Maybe you should jump off that cliff too. Then I'd have somebody to admire.

STEVE: We could hold hands on the way down-

JAYSON: Like Thelma and Louise.

STEVE: And...fade to white...

X X X X

ACT TWO

Pedestrians

(TRAVIS, JAYSON, STEVE, SAM, playing poker.)

SAM: Who's having another one?

(Everyone puts up their hand. SAM exits to fetch them.)

STEVE: Aren't you driving?

TRAVIS: My car just recently crapped out. It's a write-off. So now I have to take the bus like the rest of you sorry peds. My deal?

STEVE: You're supposed to be taking me up to Costco tomorrow.

TRAVIS: I'd be more than happy to spring for the bus fare. Sevens wild, one throw.

STEVE: Does anybody else have a car?

JAYSON: No.

(SAM re-enters with beers.)

SAM: Who needs a car when we have such a friendly and efficient mass transit system?

TRAVIS: You drive, don't you Jayson?

JAYSON: No. I'm actually afraid of cars.

SAM: Automophobia.

JAYSON: One and a half tonnes of steel and glass hurtling down the highway at ridiculous speeds man was never meant to experience.

TRAVIS: Imagine how you'll feel in an airplane. Steve.

STEVE: Three.

JAYSON: Three.

SAM: Three.

TRAVIS: One for me.

STEVE: Fifty cents. Nobody here has a car?

SAM: I think that's the general consensus.

JAYSON: I'll raise you a quarter.

STEVE: That's ridiculous. Everybody has a car. This is the twenty-first century. Never before has mass transit been so unpopular. Niall has a car.

SAM: No. I'll see that quarter.
STEVE: Lil has a car, then.
JAYSON: No.
TRAVIS: I'm going to raise a dollar.
STEVE: I fold.
SAM: Fold.
STEVE: I've seen her driving a car.
JAYSON: It's her dad's car. I'll see your dollar and call it.
STEVE: Maybe we should pool our resources and get a car.
TRAVIS: Four aces.
JAYSON: You actually have four aces.
TRAVIS: Let's see it.
JAYSON: Pair of sevens.
TRAVIS: Sevens are wild.
JAYSON: Three fives, pair of sevens, what's the difference?
TRAVIS: Not much.
SAM: A toast. Here's to McDonald changing the face of rock music forever.
STEVE: Hear, hear.
JAYSON: Thank you Sammy. I'm looking forward to giving it a nice scar.
TRAVIS: When are you going?
JAYSON: Saturday night.
TRAVIS: Any stopovers?
JAYSON: God, I don't know. St. Louis, I think. I'm hoping to get all tranked up, so I'll be fairly oblivious.
Can you get me some morphine, doctor?
TRAVIS: Sure, no problem. Is Lil going with you?
JAYSON: She seems to think so. A little too spontaneous, I think.
STEVE: What's going on there? Something going on there?
JAYSON: No, nothing's going on there. Christ, give me a little credit.
SAM: Why would he want to bring a girl down with him when he's going to have a million to choose from when he gets there.
STEVE: Jesus, I never even thought of the groupies...
JAYSON: Twelve year olds. I'm not thinking about it either.
SAM: What is the first thing you're going to do when you get down there?
JAYSON: Get off the plane.
SAM: After that. Once you're settled in.
JAYSON: I honestly can't imagine that I'll ever be settled in there. Man, I am about to embark on the strangest journey of my life. It's all I thought about as a child. Being a rock star. I wanted to be a rock star. Weird.
SAM: Yeah, well I always wanted to work in a brewery.
TRAVIS: And I always wanted to be a doctor.
STEVE: I always wanted a split personality.
(Up comes the puppet.)
STEVE: (PUPPET) Me too. Instead I got-you!
(The puppet clocks STEVE, who falls to the floor. The others ignore him.)
SAM: So is it Steve's deal, or the puppet's?

X X X X

I Could Be A Good Dad

(NIALL in the store. SAM enters.)

SAM: Hey, Niall. Is Tiffany working?

NIALL: Sam. She'll be back in a few minutes. She's doing some merchant banking, god help me.

SAM: I thought you didn't believe in banks.

NIALL: I don't, but my creditors do. How's factory life?

SAM: Multi-Unit Creation Centre life. It's great.

NIALL: That's what you always say.

SAM: It's the best job in the world. You show up, turn a few machines on, watch a few thousand beer bottles go by, and you're home by five.

NIALL: Don't you feel...oppressed?

SAM: Nah, they're pretty good to us there.

NIALL: But you're being exploited. Someone else is getting rich off your hard work, and what do you get? Squat.

SAM: Actually, the pay is pretty damn good and we don't always work that hard. Hey, you got a book on mayonnaise!

NIALL: Where?

SAM: Right here. "The History of Mao."

NIALL: That's Mao. Mao Tse Tung.

SAM: Oh, yeah, I think I saw one of his movies. Pretty raunchy.

NIALL: Why don't you ever sit down and read one of these books? They're all about you.

SAM: I don't see "The History of Sam" anywhere...

NIALL: You're a factory worker, the quintessential proletariat, a member of the downtrodden masses being crushed in a bloodless class war. You're supposed to be outraged! You're supposed to be inciting Revolution! You're supposed to be purchasing a wide variety of merchandise from my store!

SAM: Maybe if there was a video or something...

(TIFFANY enters.)

NIALL: You're just not getting it...

SAM: Hi, Tiffany!

TIFFANY: Hi, Sammy! Here's your deposit slips. They said there was a problem with Tuesday's balance.

NIALL: What? Don't leave until I sell you something, Sam-

(NIALL exits with slips.)

SAM: It was really nice of him to give you some shifts. I been trying to get you on the list at the brewery, but they always recognize my handwriting.

TIFFANY: That's nice of you. Everybody's being very nice. It's disturbing.

SAM: I'm sorry.

TIFFANY: I'm joking. I love it. I need money. Give me all your money.

SAM: Do you need some money?

TIFFANY: No, no, no. I'm kidding.

SAM: What about Matt? Is he gonna be giving you child support or something?

TIFFANY: Oh, fuck, I don't know. I don't even really want to have anything to do with him anymore.

SAM: He ditched you?

TIFFANY: I ditched him. He wasn't exactly broken up about it.

SAM: But you're having his baby. You're gonna have to probably see him at some point.

TIFFANY: I'm not gonna think about that, Sammy. For now, I'm just going-

(NIALL re-enters suddenly.)

NIALL: Look at it this way, Sam. There's a lot of guys like you down at the brewery, and only one guy at the top is getting rich. Doesn't that piss you off?

SAM: No.

(NIALL drifts off to think up a new plan of attack.)

SAM: I think it's really great that you're having the baby.

TIFFANY: Oh yeah?

SAM: Yeah. You're gonna be an excellent mother.

TIFFANY: I hope so.

SAM: In fact you remind me of my own mother.

TIFFANY: Is that a good thing?

(NIALL comes back with a book. He is ignored.)

NIALL: Take a look at this book. It has a jazzier cover...

SAM: Oh, she's great. She's a great mother. She's really missing the whole mothering thing. She keeps at me, "When are you going to get married?" When am I getting some grandkids?" It's probably not gonna be happening any time soon.

TIFFANY: You want to have kids?

SAM: Yeah, definitely. I think I'd be a pretty excellent father.

TIFFANY: You probably would be.

NIALL: How about this? Even though you do all the work, if you show up late, or make mistakes, you get fired. Because I'm not a slave to the system, I can show up whenever I want.

SAM: Don't you lose money that way?

NIALL: ...yes.

SAM: So even though you're the boss, if you don't work, you lose money. But if I don't work, I get sick pay.

(NIALL attempts a retort, but is defeated. He wanders off.)

SAM: I think I'm totally ready to be a dad. Just haven't quite met that... certain...special...someone yet. You know?

TIFFANY: Yeah, well neither did I but you can still call me "mommy".

SAM: Are you seeing anybody right now?

TIFFANY: No.

SAM: Anybody on the horizon, waiting in the wings...

TIFFANY: No.

SAM: Got your eyes peeled for that special-

TIFFANY: The whole idea of it repulses me at the moment.

SAM: Oh.

TIFFANY: I heard that being pregnant makes you horny. The thought of even being near a man makes me sick to my stomach.

SAM: I didn't know that.

TIFFANY: I mean, this is great. I love being with you...

SAM: Oh, I love being with you too.

TIFFANY: I just can't imagine being around someone I was interested in. If I tried looking for someone now, it would be for the wrong reasons.

SAM: What if, say, you know, a guy was looking for you though. So you're not looking, but there was maybe some guy-hypothetically speaking-some guy out there looking for you.

TIFFANY: Everybody that's looked for me has turned out to be bad news. I just want to be alone and prove to everybody that I can do this on my own. I don't need a man to raise this child or be happy. The end.

SAM: Oh, that's great. I really admire that about you. I'm just sayin' it's nice to have someone around. Don't you think? For the baby, maybe.

TIFFANY: You can come over any time you want. How's that? Uncle Sammy.

SAM: That would be great. I love kids. I could take the kid to the movies. And dinner. Dinner and a movie.

TIFFANY: You want to take my kid on a date?

SAM: No, no. You would come too. It'd be a group thing. The three of us.

TIFFANY: That sounds great. You know we haven't spent much time together lately. It's really nice to

hang out with you like this. You're really easy to-

SAM: I love you.

TIFFANY: I love you too.

SAM: Yeah. I meant in a more intimate way.

(TIFFANY laughs hysterically. Defeated, SAM laughs also.)

X X X X

Reunion Tour

(A knock. SUE walks across the back of the stage.)

SUE: Did you forget your keys again? Oh, hi Travis, c'mon in. What's going on?

(SUE and TRAVIS enter.)

TRAVIS: Not much...Steve around? I'm supposed to meet him.

SUE: Tonight?

TRAVIS: He wanted to talk about something. He was pretty excited.

SUE: He hasn't come home yet.

TRAVIS: I guessed he hadn't.

SUE: So...how are you?

TRAVIS: I'm...fine...you?

SUE: Oh...good...

TRAVIS: That's good...

SUE: Listen-

(STEVE enters suddenly.)

STEVE: Hi, sweetie-Oh, and you're here, good, great. The most amazing thing has happened and you're going to want to get in on it. Wait 'til you hear this-both of you. It's incredible. It changes everything.

TRAVIS: What is it?

SUE: What are you flipping out over?

STEVE: I was talking with Niall-I know, strike one-but we were out having a drink and he starts in on me about the kids shows.

SUE: So you killed him.

STEVE: Well, at first I thought he was just picking a fight-but then he gives me this incredible idea he's had that would get me out of kid shows and onto something bigger and better.

SUE: Comedy clubs?

TRAVIS: Bank robbing.

STEVE: Retirement homes! Don't you see? I'd be doing the show for adults, not for little kids. I could finally do all the stuff I wanted to do. Say everything I wanted to say. Take the risks I wanted to take. Best of all, it's an untapped market. I did some cold calling today, and I've already got a week's worth of shows.

SUE: That's...great...

TRAVIS: Good for you.

STEVE: Good for us! Me and you! This is a great opportunity, I want you to be a part of it.

TRAVIS: Wait a minute-

STEVE: Let's get the old act back together. You only quit because you were tired of working for those little brats. This would be different. We'd be working for an audience that understands artistic performance.

TRAVIS: That's not why I quit.

STEVE: You should have seen the two of us on stage together. He really knew how to work a crowd, making balloon animals with his feet.

TRAVIS: I have double-jointed toes.

SUE: Really?

STEVE: And the finale! Travis would lie down on the floor and let all the little kids pummel him with a snow shovel. The old folks are going to love that.

SUE: A snow shovel.

TRAVIS: My dad taught me that. When I was a kid, we'd practice it all the time before I went to live with my aunt.

STEVE: And now we'll have an audience that appreciates the underlying irony of the routine.

TRAVIS: No, we won't. You will. I didn't quit because of the kids, I quit because I was tired of the act. You know that.

STEVE: What?

TRAVIS: Don't get me wrong-it was a blast. Birthday parties all winter and spring, travelling around on the festival circuit in the summer. I was young. It seemed...I don't know...defiant. Like I was Jack Kerouac in a polychromatic fright wig.

STEVE: And it can be that way again.

TRAVIS: I'm thirty years old. There comes a time when you have to just stop getting hit with a snow shovel.

SUE: We're not getting any younger...

TRAVIS: That's right. You have to take stock of your life, decide what you really need, and then go get it. I want something else.

STEVE: You can't tell me your happy doing what you're doing. I know you better than that.

TRAVIS: Alright, do you really want to know why I quit?

STEVE: You broke up the best act this side of Vaudeville.

TRAVIS: Because one night I was in a bar, talking to this wonderful woman, and we were really clicking. She asked me what I did for a living, and I couldn't tell her. I didn't want to say it out loud.

STEVE: That's bullshit!

TRAVIS: Sue knows what I'm talking about. You're meeting people for the first time, and they ask you what your boyfriend does for a living. What do you tell them?

SUE: Well, I usually-

STEVE: Dah-nah-nah-don't project your anti-clownismist attitude on her. She doesn't feel that way.

SUE: Sometimes I-

TRAVIS: What do you tell them? Do you tell them you're dating Binky the Clown, and he goes out every weekend to let children spray seltzer down his pants?

Which actually used to be a part of the act-I don't know if you still do it.

STEVE: Rarely.

SUE: I don't tell everyone. They ask the same stupid questions. Make the same stupid jokes. Sometimes I just don't want to deal with it.

STEVE: And why is this the first time I'm hearing about this?

SUE: I didn't want to hurt your feelings. It's not a big deal.

STEVE: I thought you wanted to have my children! How could you want that if you're ashamed of me?

SUE: I'm not ashamed of you.

TRAVIS: It's not her fault, Steve, it's the nature of the vocation.

STEVE: I'm sorry you feel that way. Both of you.

TRAVIS: Hey, I'm still your oldest friend. I still think you're the funniest clown I've ever seen.

STEVE: It'll be okay. I can do this on my own. Aw, shit. I left my pies on the bus. I'm sorry. I need some air.

SUE: I'm sorry, I didn't mean it the way it sounded-

STEVE: It's okay.

(STEVE tries to exit with dignity, but stumbles on his way out.)

TRAVIS: He'll be okay. The way of the clown is a lonely road.

X X X X

I'm Leaving

(NIALL and LIL.)

LIL: We have to talk.

NIALL: I love the sound of this already. With just that one sentence...

LIL: I want to tell you something.

NIALL: Alright, alright...I know what you're going to say. So you don't have to say it.

LIL: You do?

NIALL: Yeah, I've seen it coming for a little while now.

LIL: Really.

NIALL: Actually, I've had some of those thoughts myself.

LIL: You did?

NIALL: Yeah. And you're right.

LIL: Am I.

NIALL: Yes. They are a bit crass.

LIL: What are you talking about?

NIALL: The joke t-shirts. Too much, right? They crossed the line and I can admit that now.

LIL: Niall.

NIALL: The "Mao-na Lisa," the "Karl Marx Brothers," "Lenin and McCartney"... all poor taste. They are a mockery and they're disrespectful. I can see that. But they sell so well...

LIL: We're talking about two totally different things.

NIALL: Okay, okay. I have something else to tell you-

LIL: I'm leaving.

NIALL: Pardon?

LIL: I'm leaving. You.

NIALL: Mm-hmm. Uhh...no.

LIL: No?

NIALL: That doesn't work. For me. No.

LIL: Well, I'm sorry, but-

NIALL: Good. You should be. That was a pretty hurtful thing to say.

LIL: I didn't say it to hurt you, I'm stating a fact. I want out. For real.

NIALL: Listen, sweetheart.
(He tries to hold her, she pulls away.)

NIALL: Sweetheart, this is just one of those times when...our close friend is leaving, maybe forever. Everybody's just feeling a little weird. You and I have known him the longest, so of course we're going to feel a little emotional-

LIL: No, that's not it.

NIALL: We have so much here. That's what I was about to tell you, before...I was going to tell you that I haven't been paying enough attention to you lately-

LIL: Lately? Lately? Your business is your girlfriend, not me. You barely pay any attention to me at all. Are you even aware of anything going on around you besides the fucking store?

NIALL: Alright, I recognize that I have become a little obsessed. But this is my work...this is something that I've built and it requires a great deal of time and energy to maintain it. This is what I do, do you want me to give it up?

LIL: No, I don't. Keep doing it. I'm leaving.

NIALL: Calm down. You're all worked up, you know how you get. You just need to vent for a few minutes and then you'll feel differently.

LIL: I'm perfectly calm. My mind is totally clear right now. And things are becoming clearer by the minute.

NIALL: You're not thinking straight. There is nothing wrong with what we have here. It works. It's been working great for years.

LIL: This doesn't work, not for me. I don't need this. I don't think you need it either. All you need is your work.

NIALL: People work for a living, Lil. They work. I work. I have to work. That's real life.

LIL: It's not life at all, it's not living. Not for me, it's not.

NIALL: If we don't work, we can't live. Maybe I don't have to work so much. But the more I work, the more we have. We're comfortable, we have creature comforts, I'm trying to provide for you, why are you upset with me for wanting to provide for you?

LIL: It's not about stuff-

NIALL: I know it's not about stuff. It's about our future together. I want the best possible future for us. I love you. We're working towards a common goal. I have great hopes for our future. We could get married, have children. Don't you want that sort of thing? A family? Security?

LIL: These are things that you want! It doesn't have anything to do with me, you could just plug anybody into your equation. It doesn't have to be me. Just so long as it's somebody you can manipulate into believing that what you want is what they want too.

NIALL: Where is all this coming from? What the hell is wrong with you, suddenly. This sort of discontent doesn't just pop up suddenly.

LIL: No, it doesn't. If you weren't so preoccupied, you'd have seen it sooner. I don't want to be your puppet anymore. I'm leaving. I'm going far away.

NIALL: What are you talking about?

LIL: I'm going back to Los Angeles.

NIALL: With Jayson.

LIL: That's right.

NIALL: Well.

LIL: Well.

NIALL: How long has this been going on?

LIL: How long has what been going on?

NIALL: Don't treat me like an idiot, Lil. Just tell me. I have a right to know.

LIL: What are you talking about?

NIALL: What do you mean, what am I talking about? Do I have to say it? Do I have to spell it out? It's not painful enough that I have to hear it?

LIL: I think you have the wrong idea...

NIALL: Bullshit. I can't believe this. I can't fucking believe this! How could you do this to me?

LIL: It's not like that, Niall. It's not like that at all.

NIALL: You're lying.

LIL: I never lie to you. I never have. I'm only going with him because he happens to be going out there. He's my friend.

NIALL: Yeah, well, he's no friend of mine. Go then. Go. See how far you get.

LIL: Niall, wait-

(NIALL exits hurriedly.)

X X X X

Are You Happy?

(TIFFANY alone in her apartment. A knock.)

TIFFANY: Come in!

(JAYSON enters. TIFFANY is surprised.)

JAYSON: Are you busy?

TIFFANY: No. Come in. Sit down.

(They both sit. JAYSON is silent.)

TIFFANY: Staring contest?

JAYSON: Are you happy?

TIFFANY: Am I happy that I'm pregnant, you mean?

JAYSON: No. Are you happy.

TIFFANY: Yes, I'm perfectly happy. Why wouldn't I be.

JAYSON: I just wanted to know that you were.
TIFFANY: Why's that? Are you overwhelmed by guilt suddenly?
JAYSON: No.
TIFFANY: Oh good. For a minute there I thought you'd become human.
JAYSON: I'm not here to fight with you.
TIFFANY: Why are you here?
JAYSON: I just wanted to know that you're happy.
TIFFANY: What the fuck do you care? Why do you care suddenly? You didn't care how I felt for the last four years.
JAYSON: Of course I did.
TIFFANY: What are you doing? Trying to patch everything up so you can enjoy La-La Land with a clear conscience?
JAYSON: Look...I'm here because I care. I know I did some stupid things-
TIFFANY: Yeah. Some.
JAYSON: But it was a long time ago. And I never meant to hurt you.
TIFFANY: No, you just wanted to fuck some other people. Well, I'm fine, thank you. Go off and have a good time. I'm sure there's lots of stupid girls in L.A. who'd love to have you treat them like shit.
JAYSON: It doesn't have to be like this, Tiff.
TIFFANY: Yeah, it does. Don't worry, I'm going to name him after you. You were my one true love, I'll never forget you, blah blah blah, goodnight and goodbye.
JAYSON: Goodbye then. I wish you the best of luck with everything.
TIFFANY: Yeah, thanks.
JAYSON: Why are we leaving it like this? This is stupid. We were best friends.
TIFFANY: It didn't mean enough to you at the time.
JAYSON: I want us to be friends again. I'm very sorry, Tiffany.
TIFFANY: Well I'm glad you are, but I don't need your friendship. I don't need Jayson as a friend. It's done.
(Silence.)
JAYSON: I guess I'll go then. I'm sorry to have come here with this.
TIFFANY: You all packed up?
JAYSON: Pretty much.
TIFFANY: What are you doing with The Spaz?
JAYSON: I think Sam's gonna take her. Unless you want her.
TIFFANY: No. Have fun.
JAYSON: Thanks. Maybe I'll run into you again someday.
(JAYSON exits.)

X X X X

Sitting In a Tree

(SUE sitting quietly in a bar. TRAVIS enters.)
TRAVIS: Sue! I didn't expect to see you here.
SUE: I didn't think anyone I knew came to this bar. What are you doing here?
TRAVIS: Looking for love. What about you?
SUE: Same thing. I'm kidding. Steve had a show, and I didn't want to be alone.
TRAVIS: Birthday party?
SUE: Bingo Hall. It's part of the new old folks thing.
TRAVIS: Not a great place to start. They don't like things interfering with their bingo. So, if you didn't want to be alone, why did you come to a bar where you don't know anyone?
SUE: I wanted to be by myself, but I didn't want to be alone. Is that crazy?

TRAVIS: No, that's not crazy. I'll move on, if you want.

SUE: No. Stay. Talk to me.

TRAVIS: Okay. What do you want to talk about?

SUE: Tell me about her.

TRAVIS: Who's that.

SUE: The love you're looking for. What's she like?

TRAVIS: She's beautiful.

SUE: Of course.

TRAVIS: Not super model beautiful, but very pretty in an unselfconscious way. Funny. She wouldn't own a t.v.-she wouldn't want one. She'd have a nervous habit-like tearing napkins or something-and she'd have to be good with tools. I don't know why, but I find a woman with a hammer very endearing.

SUE: Do you think she comes to this bar?

TRAVIS: Hard to say. She's very spontaneous.

SUE: Maybe she'll show up tonight. Maybe she's just getting out of a cab right now and is about to walk through that door.

TRAVIS: That's a man.

SUE: Maybe it's the next cab then.

TRAVIS: That would be nice. I've tried just about everything to find her. Bars, laundromats, book clubs, newspaper ads, computer dating, video dating. You name it, I've tried it. I'm this close to visiting a woman's prison.

SUE: I wouldn't go that far.

TRAVIS: Nothing else is working.

SUE: Maybe you're trying too hard. Sometimes love sneaks up on you.

TRAVIS: Maybe. It's just that-well, I'm just not where I thought I would be at this point in my life. It seems the older I get, the more difficult it becomes.

SUE: Where do you want to be?

TRAVIS: I'm thirty. I'm still in school. I'm hugely in debt.

SUE: Yeah, well that'll change pretty quickly soon as you're in practice.

TRAVIS: I know, it's just-I really thought at this point I'd be with someone. You know, married, kids, all that corny stuff.

SUE: It's not corny. Not at all. A lot of people want that.

TRAVIS: I haven't met them.

SUE: You'd be surprised.

TRAVIS: I just want my life to get started. I feel like I've wasted the last ten years.

SUE: Wasted? You seem pretty happy. Well-adjusted.

TRAVIS: That's just it. I was happy. Really happy. When I finished school, I wanted to take some time off and enjoy myself. I started the act with Steve, and it was a big success. I was good at it and it was fun. After a year I decided I better start sending out resumes. Get a real job. Nothing happened. I watched people I went to school with take jobs in grocery stores and restaurants, and I thought, "At least I'm doing something I'm happy with." I think that's the biggest lie they told us when we were kids. "It doesn't matter what you do when you grow up as long as it makes you happy." When I was deciding what to major in at university, my guidance counsellor, my teachers, even my parents all said, "take something that interests you." Not, "take something that will get you a job." Go get an English degree or a History degree. The world belongs to liberal arts majors. Except the world has changed.

SUE: Even teaching jobs are getting harder and harder to find.

TRAVIS: All the old jobs are filled. Most of us didn't have the skills or the foresight to get the new jobs. Everyone kept saying, "Oh, the jobs will open up. There'll be a huge wave of retirement, you'll be able to get any job you want." But it never happened. People work 'til they drop dead. Who does that "Freedom Fifty-Five shit"? Nobody.

SUE: One of the teachers at my school is seventy-four years old.

TRAVIS: That's exactly what I'm talking about. I saw what was going on. By the time those jobs open up, they're not going to be open to us. They'll go to the next generation, not us. Who's going to hire a thirty-year old who hasn't been able to get a real job for ten years? Screw it. That's not going to happen to me. I'm doing what I should've done ten years ago.

SUE:

But you're happy about it, aren't you? You like medical school.

TRAVIS:

It's not about being happy. It's about security. If you make less than your age in thousands of dollars per year, it's time to think about a change. It's not getting any cheaper to live in this country. I work hard. I become medically competent, I become a doctor. I move to Vermont. I earn lots and lots of money. I become an adult. I look in the mirror, and my hair is getting thinner, and my stomach's not as flat as it used to be, and I still feel like a little kid. I'm tired of that. I want to have a home and a big t.v. and a new car and a pool and a cottage in the Hampshires. I want to be condescending to people younger than me. So is that selling out, though? Wanting to carve a niche, does that make me a horrible person?

SUE: No. You also want to help sick people get better.

TRAVIS: Well, yeah, there's that too. What about you, are you happy?

SUE: Yeah, I'm happy. I'm very happy.

X X X X

I'm Not Going

(JAYSON, packing. LIL enters.)

LIL: Knock, knock.

JAYSON: Hi, come in.

LIL: Wow. What are you going to do with all this stuff?

JAYSON: I don't know. Furnished apartment for rent. None of it means anything to me. I'm taking as little of this stuff as I can get away with. Are you packed up?

LIL: Well, that's why I stopped by. I'm not going with you.

JAYSON: Oh no?

LIL: No. I'm going to take that part with the Blizzard Company.

JAYSON: That's what I suggested from the start.

LIL: I know.

JAYSON: You're sure then? I have your ticket.

LIL: You got the ticket already?

JAYSON: I said I would. Don't worry though, the record company paid for it.

LIL: As long as it didn't come out of your pocket.

JAYSON: There's nothing in my pocket. Not yet, anyway. So you've decided to stay and you're happy with that.

LIL: Yeah.

JAYSON: Niall didn't talk you out of it, did he?

LIL: He tried to. But I'm not staying because he wants me too. In fact, I'm leaving him.

JAYSON: Well.

LIL: Well. Thanks for letting me come on board, anyway.

JAYSON: I can think of no one in this world who's company I would prefer.

LIL: It would have been fun.

JAYSON: There's lots of time. Come down later. When you're ready.

LIL: Yeah.

JAYSON: We can hang out in swanky restaurants and sign autographs.

LIL: It's a date. Good luck, Jayson.

JAYSON: You too, Lil. I'm gonna miss you.

LIL: I'll miss you too. We've known each other a long time.
JAYSON: We're still going to know each other. I'll call you. Make sure I can still get in touch with you when you move out of Niall's place.
LIL: I will.
(They embrace.)
LIL: Take care.

X X X X

My Boyfriend's a Clown

STEVE: Fuck! What a day.
SUE: Good show?
STEVE: Great! Those old folks really eat this stuff up.
SUE: How did the Plath bit go?
STEVE: I cut it. You're right, it isn't funny. The rubber poop bit killed, though.
SUE: I wish you had told me you were going to be this late.
STEVE: They like to talk after the show. It's hard to get away.
SUE: What do they want to talk about, the show?
STEVE: No, they never want to talk about the show. They always talk about the same thing-their grandkids. They just go on and on about how amazing these kids are even though they hardly ever see them. They whip out these photos and tell me all about soccer practice and math tests. It's really kind of heartwarming. They get all worked up and animated. I think I'd make a good grandfather. There's lots of room in my wallet for snaps of grandkids. How was your day?
SUE: I took Tiffany shopping for baby stuff. She really has no idea about all the stuff she needs. She's trying though. She's really trying. I think she's going to make a good mom.
STEVE: You think so?
SUE: Yeah, I do.
STEVE: If you say so.
SUE: Oh, guess what I got? I bought a new shirt.
(Sue takes off her outer shirt to reveal a t-shirt that reads "My Boyfriend is a Clown (And I Don't Give A Shit)")
STEVE: That's cute. Can I touch it?
SUE: No!
(STEVE chases SUE around the apartment.)
STEVE: Just a little bit?
SUE: No!
STEVE: Just here and there-
SUE: Keep your clown mitts offa me!
STEVE: I hope he has your eyes.
SUE: Who?
STEVE: Nobody. Feel like going out for a walk? It's beautiful.
SUE: Yeah. That would be nice.
(They begin to exit.)
STEVE: Is Margaret Atwood funny?
SUE: No.

X X X X

You're Not Leaving

(NIALL and JAYSON.)

NIALL: Do you have a second?

JAYSON: Yeah. What's up.

NIALL: It's about your going to L.A.

JAYSON: I promise I'll call every day.

NIALL: Let's cut the shit. I never was one for useless chit-chat.

JAYSON: Yeah, you're more of a monologue sort of guy.

NIALL: You're not going.

JAYSON: What?

NIALL: Did I stutter? You're not going to L.A. You want me to say it again? You're not going. Got it?

JAYSON: Not really. Are you joking?

NIALL: I'm not joking.

JAYSON: What is this? You seem angry.

NIALL: What is this? Are you sleeping with her?

JAYSON: Did I miss your opening statement or something? What are you on about?

NIALL: At least be straight with me. I know you have a problem with that, but maybe you could try just this once.

JAYSON: What the fuck are you talking about?

NIALL: Fine, I'll play your stupid game. Lil has this idea in her head that she wants to leave me because she thinks she wants to go back to L.A. What made her think of this? Enter villain number one-toi. I thought that because of our shared history you would be man enough to tell me up front, to my face-

JAYSON: You're really paranoid, and you're mistaken.

NIALL: I wouldn't be paranoid if everyone wasn't trying to fuck me over.

JAYSON: I don't have a clue what you're talking about. Am I sleeping with your girlfriend? Why would you even ask me that? If I was going to sleep with her, I would have done it eight years ago, don't you think?

NIALL: There's no other explanation. I know her. And sometimes she listens too closely to the advice of her friends. She can even be convinced to do some things she never would have thought of on her own.

JAYSON: And you haven't entertained the idea that she's leaving you because you're a miserable prick and she's not happy?

NIALL: No. You don't know her, obviously. And you don't know me, if you think I'm the prick.

JAYSON: No, maybe not.

NIALL: You don't know anyone. Not even you. You don't want to know. You don't want to get dirty. You'd hate to have somebody thinking they could rely on you-on your help or your friendship or even just a little bit of fucking respect.

JAYSON: Just settle down, man.

NIALL: You know what your problem is?

JAYSON: You're going to tell me, aren't you.

NIALL: You're a pedestrian, you're a tourist. You don't live in the real world. You're walking through a museum, looking at and criticizing the work of others. It's pathetic. You're an apathetic shit disturber.

JAYSON: Those are some harsh fucking words man, and you better think really hard before you continue.

NIALL: Or what? Will there be consequences?

JAYSON: There's always consequences.

NIALL: Is that some kind of threat?

JAYSON: No. That's life.

NIALL: What do you know about life? You're living in a dream and you're going to wake up soon and realize that you're fucked.

JAYSON: I'm living the way I want to live. Just like you.
NIAL: No, don't you dare compare yourself to me. I work for a living. I'm giving something back to my community.
JAYSON: What. What are you giving back? You're just giving me a lot of grief.
NIAL: I represent the working class who pays the taxes so that people like you can sponge up the drippings and play your little guitar and fuck groupies!
JAYSON: You think you work harder than me? Look-I'm just doing what I do. Not everybody is like you-in fact nobody is like you. You're a capitalist communist, for godsake!
NIAL: Are you sleeping with her?
JAYSON: No.
NIAL: You're lying.
JAYSON: You're out of your mind.
NIAL: Why the hell does she want to go with you?
JAYSON: She doesn't.
NIAL: What?
JAYSON: She's not coming. But she's not staying with you, either.
NIAL: Well then. You see? You fucked us both over.
JAYSON: She's not happy with you, Nial. It's got absolutely nothing to do with me.
NIAL: So what, did she come crying to you about it?
JAYSON: She didn't want to speak about it.
NIAL: Christ. Who the fuck are you? Who are you to interfere with my life this way?
JAYSON: Everything she's decided to do, she's decided for herself. I didn't ask her to come with me. I didn't even think of it. Why would I? It was her idea.
If you would take a minute to talk to her, you'd understand the situation a little better. And you wouldn't come in here treating me like shit.
NIAL: Fuck this. Have fun.
(NIAL exits.)
JAYSON: I'll call every day.

X X X X

All The World's A Stage

(STEVE onstage with fright wig and red nose.)

STEVE: Thank you, very much for humouring a sad clown. Let me tell you folks, you got it easy. Seniors discounts, seniors days, patent medicines for just about anything. I tell you, I got on the bus the other day-I said, "any discount for Generation X?" And he charged me double fare! Thank God I didn't ask about a discount for clowns. Anyway, in response to that, I'd like to juggle these three grenades. Now, don't worry, I'm a professional.

STEVE: (CONTINUED)

And the guy who sold them to me said at least two of them would be duds anyway. Here we go.

(STEVE juggles grenades.)

STEVE: I don't know why they turned down my application for life insurance...I'm pretty healthy...
(He drops one.)

STEVE: Hit the deck!

(He hits the deck. The grenade doesn't explode.)

STEVE: Okay, that's definitely a dud. Geez, no wonder the gulf war was so expensive. Okay then, rather than make the news again for the third time this week, I'm going to put the grenades away and instead, make some balloon animals. Here we go with the balloon animals, let me get my rubbers out...waitaminute, there's something in my shoe. It's throwing off my comic timing...let me just see what that is.

(He pulls some rubber poop from his shoe.)

STEVE: Gosh, no wonder I've been feeling so crappy. Okay then, balloon animals. What would you like. A giraffe? Done. Giraffes are my specialty, actually, I'm glad I misheard you say that. Now the act of blowing up a balloon is not in and of itself particularly funny, so I would ask all of you to sit quietly and imagine I'm actually blowing up my date for the evening.

(STEVE makes excited faces as he blows up the balloon. Suddenly he loses his grip and it takes off like a rocket.)

STEVE: Whoop, there we go, ladies and gentlemen, a giraffe-stronaut. I'm not into the balloon animals all that much anyway, I just wanted to see how many times I could squeeze the word "giraffe" into my act. Speaking of giraffes, I have a rather tall friend who's on his way out to Los Angeles to be a rock star. That's what my generation is known for, long-haired hippy guitar-playing slackers, right? Well, ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to

STEVE: (CONTINUED)

assure you that I am no exception. Clown by day-rock star by night. I'd like to play a song for you now that I wrote for a girl that I wanted to be my girlfriend. I played it for her, and she went straight out to get a restraining order placed on me. That girl grew up to be Demi Moore. The song's called "My Heart Is A Delicate Blossom," and I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoy saying "giraffe".

(He produces a tiny little toy guitar which he plays savagely, culminating in his smashing it to pieces on the floor.)

STEVE: "My Heart Is A Delicate Blossom." I'm sorry, I should have suggested you turn down your hearing aids. Ladies and gentlemen, you've been a wonderful audience, worth your weight in epsom salts. To close the show, I've got a wonderful treat for you. Tonight, for one night only, we have with us one of Canada's premiere self-denigrating clowns. It's great to be working with him again, he's very funny, please put your hands together for Cranky The Cantankerous Clown!

(TRAVIS enters in fright wig and red nose. He has a snow shovel.)

TRAVIS: Shut up.

STEVE: And now, for your entertainment and edification we present, "Hitting the Clown Repeatedly With a Snow Shovel."

(STEVE hits TRAVIS repeatedly with a snow shovel. TRAVIS protests through it all, but ends up in a heap on the floor.)

STEVE: Ladies and gentlemen, Cranky The Cantankerous Clown! No, no, don't applaud, you'll only spoil

him.

(STEVE produces a broom and sweeps up the mess, including TRAVIS. As he sweeps the mess offstage:)

STEVE:

Thanks ladies and gentlemen, I'm Stinky The Wonder Horse, I'll see you in court! Goodnight!

X X X X

A Record

(TIFFANY at home. SAM enters, excited.)

TIFFANY: Hi, Sammy. Did you bring chips?

SAM: Sure did.

(SAM produces many bags of chips.)

SAM: I wasn't sure what kind you wanted.

TIFFANY: All of 'em.

SAM: Baby sleeping?

TIFFANY: I just put her down.

SAM: Look what else I picked up.

(SAM produces a CD.)

TIFFANY: What is it?

SAM: It's the album.

TIFFANY: The album.

SAM: The album!

TIFFANY: Oh!

SAM: Can I put it on?

TIFFANY: Just turn it down low.

(SAM exits to put the CD on. He comes back with the case.

The music is playing.)

TIFFANY: Have you listened to it yet?

SAM: Just the first couple of songs. I wanted to bring it over.

TIFFANY: Is this the first track?

SAM: Yeah.

(TIFFANY examines the case.)

TIFFANY: "The Spaz." He wrote a song about his cat?

SAM: I think it's about you actually.

(They sit and listen to the music, which becomes louder for the audience's benefit. SAM bobs his head enthusiastically. TIFFANY sits quietly. Fade to black.)

Running Rude

By Jeff Culbert

Forks of the Thames River, London, Ontario. Late summer afternoon. Although the audience can't see it, there is tree cover, with branches almost coming down to the river downstage, and the riverbank rising upstage, creating a semi-private hideout.

We hear Rudi and Boot approaching.

Scene 1 - Rudi and Boot run on, Boot limping and angry.

BOOT: Ah jeez!

RUDI: Don't yell.

BOOT: Don't yell. Ok, I'll just channel all of this pain into facial contortions.

RUDI: Just keep quiet... What is it? Let me see.

BOOT: Just let me rest for a while.

RUDI: OK

BOOT: What the hell were you thinking? Jesus. "Better sacrifice Boot. They'll give up the chase and take him to a hospital if they have any compassion at all."

RUDI: I was buying us some time.

BOOT: By rolling a rock down the hill on me? Isn't that what you do to the bad guys?

RUDI: They were down there. They had to wait for the rocks to go by - those rocks are what got us out of there. The one just took a funny roll.

BOOT: The one? It was like going through an asteroid belt.

RUDI: I read the lay of the hill wrong at first... I'll grant you that...and I'm sorry...How does it feel now?

BOOT: Well I've become distracted by the internal setting anger, so... why don't you just

RUDI: Hey we should be celebrating.

BOOT: Oh yes, by God, we did something momentous tonight, didn't we? Pissed off a couple of parking lot guys who will have to spend half the night washing the paint off.

RUDI: No, it'll be seen. Lots of people will see it. And some of them will think about it.

BOOT: Yes, I can see it. They'll say "What's this? `Smog"? Now why would somebody paint something like that on the side of my car? (Wait a minute.) The word smog on my car has made me see that I must not make smog because it's stinky and bad. So I think I'll change my habits and phone my politicians."

RUDI: Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but soon , and for the rest of their lives.

BOOT: We just got two guys really pissed off and gave them a lot of work. And crushed my lower leg.

RUDI: Nothing's broken.

BOOT: No

RUDI: Then I really think that you should take a minute to appreciate what we just did.

BOOT: Pissed two guys off.

RUDI: No, for them, it's just work stuff. You have a job, you do it, you try not to get too pissed off .

BOOT: They were looking pretty pissed off. Especially when they found themselves in the middle of a cave man war.

RUDI: Pretty exciting thing to happen at work. Did you ever look at it that way? We all get out share of adrenaline tonight.

BOOT: Yeah, it was a lovely share experience. Maybe we should drop by and rob them later in the evening.

RUDI: No, for them it's just a good bar story. For us, it's the biggest thing we've ever done!

BOOT: Oh, it's about building our credentials.

RUDI: Well, it is, actually. That's part of it. Where would Beethoven be without good promotion? Beethoven who?, that's where. But it's not about you and me in the big picture.

BOOT: It's about providing an evil fairy service for parking lot attendants.

RUDI: No, you know what it's about.
 BOOT: No, I don't.
 RUDI: Yes you do.
 BOOT: No I don't.
 RUDI: Why are you here then?
 BOOT: I'm not here.
 RUDI: ...(laughs on burst of laughter) ...(laughs another burst) ... You're not here. Well that about sums it up then.
 BOOT: This was your gig. I don't get it frankly.
 RUDI: You don't get what?
 BOOT: A bunch of derange-do with nothing to show for it.
 RUDI: We might have a lot to show for it.
 BOOT: Like what?
 RUDI: Like, some of the cars might make it out onto the street like this. The cars go out, everyone sees the word 'smog' everywhere, it's on their minds, They talk about it, They worry about it. And the next time the question of air quality pops up, they say "let's do something about it instead of slowly choking ourselves".
 BOOT: Those guys will be cleaning it off right now. They won't let it dry.
 RUDI: They won't clean it off.
 BOOT: Yes they will, probably. They were supposed to be guarding the security of those cars, right?
 RUDI: Would you clean it off?
 BOOT: (beat) Well, I probably wouldn't be a security guard.
 RUDI: They probably don't want to be security guards either.
 BOOT: That's right. So of all the things you could do, in the whole realm of human possibilities...
 RUDI: You get to choose the next gig.
 BOOT: ...why would you waste your time with all this?...
 RUDI: Did you get a good photo? (pause) Did you get a photo?
 BOOT: Rudi, we were being chased.
 RUDI: Oh, nook
 BOOT: (Two men were chasing me, Rudi). And rocks were hitting my leg. And you're disappointed that I didn't get a picture of it?
 RUDI: No, that was too bad ... About your leg ... and about the photo ...Lend me the camera for a bit? (She takes it and begins her exit)
 BOOT: The cops will be there by now!
 RUDI: Yeah, but without the documentation, we might just be a couple of asshole vandals.
 BOOT: That's what I'm saying...
 (She is gone)

.....`Lighting change`.....

Scene 2 - Fast food restaurant. Boot is talking to a customer. The customer's words are given in brackets, but the audience can't hear them.

BOOT: Is that everything? (Aren't you supposed to ask if I'd like fries with that?)
 Oh did you want fries with that? (No, but you're supposed to ask.)
 Are you an inspector, then? (No, but I used to work here.)
 And when you were working here, did you always ask if they'd like fries with that? (Yeah, you had to.)
 You had to ...or...? (You could get fired.)
 I see. So, did you want fries with that or not? (No, no, I just ...)
 OK, well, let's get you on your way , then. Got keep those lines moving. That's another thing you have to do , right?

Turns away. Fills order in three efficient movements. Hands bag to a co-worker who is unseen by the audience.

Ring this out on six for me? ...No, just a minor dinkus ...thanks.

Changes his appearance through some apparel modification and joins Rudi outside. Hands her a milkshake. Tastes his own.

RUDI: So?

BOOT: What?

RUDI: Was there any buzz at all?

BOOT: No.

RUDI: Nothing.

BOOT: Not about the gig.

RUDI: Did you ask?

BOOT: I gathered intelligence.

RUDI: That'll be the day.

BOOT: Well, I guess it is.

(beat)

RUDI: Nothing about us, though.

BOOT: I didn't say that.

RUDI: What did you hear?

BOOT: ... There's talk of whether you and I have sex.

RUDI: Who?

BOOT: You and I.

RUDI: Who says?

BOOT: Just one or two people.

RUDI: Who?

(beat)

BOOT: Rick.

RUDI: Rick. (beat) And what did you tell him?

BOOT: I said it was none of his business.

RUDI: You did not.

BOOT: I did.

RUDI: Why didn't you just say no?

BOOT: Because it's none of his business.

RUDI: But won't he think that we do?

BOOT: I don't see why he would.

RUDI: Because it sounds like you're hiding something.

BOOT: I don't see why.

RUDI: Because that's what you'd say if you were hiding something.

BOOT: No, that's what I would say if it was none of his business.

RUDI: Rick ...so who else?

BOOT: Who else what?

RUDI: Who else thinks it?

BOOT: Oh, I don't know.

RUDI: Come on, who?

BOOT: I'm not going to pass on sources of idle gossip.

RUDI: A lot of people?

BOOT: Who cares? It's just recreational speculation.

RUDI: It's not what I want people thinking.

BOOT: Yes, it's a shameful smearing of your good name: I'll admit that. Ewe, she's having sex with ... ewe.

RUDI: I don't want people thinking that you're my boyfriend.

BOOT: I got that impression, yeah.

RUDI: Don't be selfish. God, you're suck. (pause) We are not a romantic couple, right?

BOOT: Right.

RUDI: My romantic possibilities might stay away if they think that I have a boyfriend.

BOOT: I share your pain.

RUDI: You do share my pain. I know it.

BOOT: Mm-hmm.

RUDI: What happens to me also happens to you.

BOOT: I'll say.

RUDI: So you feel it.

BOOT: That's what I said.

RUDI: Sarcastically, though.

BOOT: Well, life is complicated. (pause)

The point is, it was none of his business. (pause)

And the other point is that it goes both ways.

RUDI: What does?

BOOT: The women are none too densely gathered around me, either.

RUDI: Well, exactly, so why didn't you just say no?

BOOT: Say no?

RUDI: To Rick.

BOOT: Rick is not going to get us dates, believe me.

RUDI: ...Never mind.

BOOT: ... D'you know what, though? Maybe we should have sex. Sometime. (pause)

RUDI: That would not be a good idea.

BOOT: Depends how you look at it, now.

RUDI: The big picture.

BOOT: (beat) But it's so heavy and weighty, that big picture. And does it really match the couch?

RUDI: It's not gonna happen, you might as well cut it out right now, because it'll just annoy me if you bring it up again.

BOOT: It was just an idea ...jeez ...What's wrong with it again?

RUDI: Number one, we don't have that kind of relationship, number two, even if we wanted to have that kind of relationship, it wouldn't be a good idea, because one of us would end up leaving town.

BOOT: Right ...right ...huh. (pause) Pretty passionate feelings.

RUDI: Well, you know me.

BOOT: Do I ever. (pause) Well, those are excellent reasons and everything, there's no denying that, but it seems to me that having that kind of passion well up in you at the thought of having sex with me - well, that's quite an honour, really.

RUDI: We're not good mates.

BOOT: Blimey.

RUDI: We're not.

BOOT: Who said anything about mating?

RUDI: Well, call it what you like.

BOOT: ... I think you're flirting with me.

RUDI: You're an idiot.

BOOT: I think I must teach you about flirting.

RUDI: I think I must teach you about open head wounds.

BOOT: She turns her eyes away from the high beams of passion.

RUDI: No, she gets annoyed at having to listen to this crap when she asked you to leave it alone.

BOOT: ...Now don't get mad... Think of the good feelings behind it.
RUDI: Fine. What's your gig gonna be?
BOOT: Are you thinking of them?
RUDI: No. What's your gig gonna be?
BOOT: ...Do you want to do it?
RUDI: Your gig?
BOOT: Yeah.
RUDI: Sure. You did mine, now I do yours. Let's hear it.
BOOT: All right. I haven't figured it all out yet...
RUDI: Fine. My turn again. Here's what we do...
BOOT: No. We're doing mine. But there have to be some choices made before we do a final plan.
RUDI: Then we make them today.
BOOT: It's not just a throw-together...
RUDI: No, if there's one thing I'm sticking to, it's one meeting/one plan. We're not gonna talk a lot and get into meetings and newsletters and shit. We're gonna do stuff. And we stick to that one rule.
BOOT: The one ruler that I never agreed to ...
RUDI: But the one I'm sticking to.
BOOT: Well, look, I'll tell you my plan, but it's my plan and we do it my way.
RUDI: Not if...
BOOT: No, it's my plan and I'll tell it to you, and if you don't want to do it, then that's your decision and you can go solo.
RUDI: I'm not agreeing to anything that we can't completely plan today.
BOOT: Fine. That's your decision.
RUDI: So what's the plan?
BOOT: No, forget it. You stick to your rules.
RUDI: You don't have a plan.
BOOT: I do so.
RUDI: What is it?
BOOT: There are decisions still to be made and you are not in a co-operative enough mood to talk about them constructively.
RUDI: Mr. Bluff.
BOOT: No I'm not.
RUDI: Old Blindy Bluff.
BOOT: It's just not all figured out yet.
RUDI: Figured out? Will we be working on the math of it for the first week or two?
BOOT: No we won't because I'm not telling you.
RUDI: Oh, he has an excellent plan. But it's a secret, you see. Old Blindy Bluff and the Excellent Secret.
BOOT: You're so good to work with.
RUDI: Old Blindy Bluff and the Fat Pouty Lip
BOOT: Obnoxious Annie and the Personality Void.
RUDI: "Obnoxious Annie and the Personality Void."
BOOT: Oh, that's clever. Very witty. And my word, what a funny voice.
RUDI: Wasn't it?
BOOT: And just moments ago, you were a Grumpy Gerty.
RUDI: Seems like a bygone era.
BOOT: I wonder if your personality disorder has a name.
RUDI: How kind of you to wonder so.
BOOT: Maybe it's normal abnormality. Maybe there's a cure.
RUDI: What's your plan, by the way?
BOOT: My plan is to go the Forks and have a nap.

Remember.

.....'Lighting change'.....

Scene 4 - The Forks. Boot enters and meets Rudi. Ad lib as he reluctantly locks his fingers to make a pocket and Rudi steps up into it.

RUDI: Now is that comfortable?

BOOT: Peh!

RUDI: Comfortable enough? All right, we'll just see if this is going to work ... (ad lib as they struggle, trying to reach the highest point possible. Finally down she comes.) It's close. I checked it out today for height and I don't think it'll be a problem getting over.

BOOT: I don't want to do this, Rude.

RUDI: ... Well, sometimes you hafta do things you don't want to do.

BOOT: No, it's a stupid idea and it's not your turn anyway.

RUDI: It's a good idea and you forfeited your turn.

BOOT: It's your worst idea yet and I did no such thing.

RUDI: I don't think you even get it. And it's one meeting/ one plan.

BOOT: Says who?

RUDI: Says who - you don't get it or says who - one meeting/ one plan?

BOOT: Says who and says who?

RUDI: Me and me.

BOOT: Exactly.

RUDI: So you do get it, do you?

BOOT: Well, unless there's something beyond the obvious. Some genius dimension that lays cleverly concealed to the casual observer.

RUDI: No, it's really straightforward. We put a sign on his lawn...

BOOT: ...which will be such a unique, eye-catching sight at election time

RUDI: ...which says "Bill Doyle lives here. Bill Doyle voted for Bill 93. Bill Doyle 's a jerk."

BOOT: That's so unimaginative.

RUDI: It's called straight talk. Works well visually.

BOOT: And how many people will see it? The mailman comes by, "Morning Mrs D, what's the sign on the lawn?" "Oh, look at that. Pull it out on your way by, will you Jimmy?" And another great caper by Rudi and Boot!

RUDI: The photos, Boot, remember the photos? No, of course you don't. Which reminds me- I'll take the camera this time, since you might get excited and pee your pants and forget again..

BOOT: So that's it then? There's really nothing more to it than that. A sign on the lawn. And for this you're going to climb a wall - and you don't even need to climb the wall, for God's sake - you could just go in and out the front gate...

RUDI: I'm jut looking at all the avenues of escape. There are lights at the front...

BOOT: ...and if you could figure out a way to swing in on a rope, you'd try that.

RUDI: Only if necessary.

BOOT: but wouldn't that be fun?

RUDI: Yeah, probably.

BOOT: So why not do it?

RUDI: It isn't necessary.

BOOT: But putting up a dumb sign that hardly anyone will see or hear about - that's necessary.

RUDI: Not necessary, but it's a good idea.

BOOT: It's rude too. It's an invasion of privacy.

RUDI: That's why it's a good idea.

BOOT: ...because it's rude.
RUDI: Yes, it's a deliberately rude gesture. And slightly menacing, I hope.
BOOT: To who?
RUDI: To Doyle.
BOOT: Your goal is to be menacing.
RUDI: To anybody involved in this decision. (beat) The sign is just the first step.
BOOT: OK, so you're doing rude things and taking pictures of them. Is that it?
RUDI: Yeah, pretty much.
BOOT: And, what? You put the pictures up on the wall? Put them in a show? Trade'em with your friends? What?
RUDI: Yeah, all those things, but for starters, we send them anonymously to the media.
BOOT: They won't print them.
RUDI: Depends how rude they are.
BOOT: Well, yeah, you blow up a building - they'd probably print that.
RUDI: There's a suggestion. Is that your gig?
BOOT: No, this is a serious thing...
RUDI: Now you're getting it.
BOOT: ...to go onto someone's private property...
RUDI: ...like I give a shit about that...
BOOT: But that's what they'll say. They'll say it's private property, his wife and kids were home, they're all scared, eco-terrorism has come to your neighbourhood...
RUDI: I am putting a sign on the man's lawn, making a tiny indentation in his chemical-grass - there's something real to be scare about, kids - and somehow, that's worse than the destruction of habitat that goes on every day, and will now get worse because this knob helped to pass this stupid bill? And this little gesture, this teeny tiny effort to participate in the democratic process by expressing my views...
BOOT: You break the law and the law will break you.
RUDI: No, it's "Break the law before the law breaks you".
BOOT: You could express your views in a better way.
RUDI: This is a pretty good way.
BOOT: Using some vaguely threatening gesture...
RUDI: So far, I've just said he's a jerk.
BOOT: With the hope of being rude and menacing.
RUDI: Being rude has its virtues.
BOOT: (laughs) Spoken like a true ... (delinquent)
RUDI: Being rude is better than being passive.
BOOT: Who's being passive?
RUDI: Most people.
BOOT: Well, they're busy.
RUDI: Yeah, that's right. They're busy.
BOOT: So we should, what? Be rude to them? Be menacing?
RUDI: Be rude and menacing to people who are responsible for the mess.
BOOT: I see. Because that will make them change their minds.
RUDI: No, but it will point out who is responsible.
BOOT: But the animosity and the negativity and the fear (that you are creating...)
RUDI: What's your better way? You want to write him a letter? You want to wait for public town- hall meeting? You know why people write letters and go to meetings? To avoid actually doing anything.
BOOT: Why don't you run against him?
RUDI: ...What, like smash into him?
BOOT: Run against him in the election.
RUDI: ...Is that your plan?

BOOT: That's it.

RUDI: That's the ultimate.

BOOT: The ultimate what?

RUDI: The ultimate trick to keep us out of trouble.

BOOT: What are you talking about?

RUDI: "You want to get things on the agenda, kids? Get organized, run in the election, join the debate. But it'll cost you a lot of money, you won't even get on TV and from the news coverage, most people won't even know you're running. In the meantime, you've channeled all of your energy and time and money into this black hole of obscurity, and we'd just like to say thank you very much for staying out of the way."

BOOT: This from a person who is reaching an audience of two with her brave eco-actions.

RUDI: I've got the photos.

BOOT: You run in the election. You go on TV. You connect with a lot of people.

RUDI: You don't get on TV.

BOOT: You do.

RUDI: They only report on the big party candidates. That's the scam.

BOOT: On the mainstream news, yes. But Cable 13 lets all candidates have some air time. And lots of people watch it.

RUDI: What, they interview you, ask a bunch of questions about things that you don't even ...

BOOT: No it's open time. They give it to you; you do what you want with it.

RUDI: Really?

BOOT: And we aim the whole campaign at this one block of TV time.

RUDI: But it costs money, doesn't it.

BOOT: The TV time is free. But you have to put money down before you can get on the ballot, yes. But that's the other thing...we run you as a Green Party candidate.

RUDI: Wait a minute...

BOOT: People will donate to the Green Party; they won't donate to Rudi and Boot.

RUDI: Yeah, what do I have to agree to?

BOOT: Nothing. The Greens didn't have a candidate here in the last election; if you run, they'll be kicking up their heels with glee.

RUDI: Why don't you run?

BOOT: Somebody has to raise the money and sign the forms and make the telephone calls, and that ain't you.

RUDI: No.

BOOT: And I think you should run anyway...because I've got an idea that could be very effective... My plan is to use the campaign to promote one of your poems.

RUDI: Which one?

BOOT: "Now is the time".

RUDI: ... Why that one?

BOOT: Because it's perfect for the election. It has local references but also the greater theme of things, it has a strong, positive feel to it, and it's one of your best poems.

RUDI: ...hmmm....

BOOT: We print it up on the flyers and posters and we use it to kick off the TV spot. The campaign promotes the poem; the poem promotes the campaign.

RUDI: That could be good.

BOOT: OK, how about this? Tomorrow, I'll announce that you're running and you can go down to Speaker's Corner and record the poem, OK? There's no guarantee that they'll play it, but we can give it a try.

RUDI: So we're doing this.

BOOT: If you're into it. Do you have any alarm clocks?

RUDI: I have a clock radio.

BOOT: (beginning of his exit) OK, never mind. I'm heading off to Goodwill.

RUDI: Hey, isn't it my turn?

BOOT: For what?

RUDI: My turn to pick the gig.

BOOT: No, actually, it's still my turn.

RUDI: You forfeited your turn.

BOOT: No, that was only according to your stupid rule., remember? If we listened to you, we'd be climbing over a wall to stick a sign in Bill Doyle's lawn.

RUDI: We could still do that.

BOOT: No!

RUDI: It's my turn, remember.

BOOT: It's my turn.

.....`Lighting change`.....

Scene 5 - They go upstage, split and circle around, Boot picking up the two alarm clocks. One or both could pick up instruments, noisemakers or signs. Now the mood is festive. Boot has been with a small group of Green supporters, standing on a busy street corner, waving Green signs, waving at cars, playing instruments and yelling and singing. Rudi arrives and they hug.

BOOT: They played it! I saw it this morning. That was the best reading of that poem I have ever heard you give.

RUDI: A lot of people said they saw it. Did they cut the part where I told everybody to watch the TV spot?

BOOT: No, they played the whole thing. Your beginning, your ending and no edits. The director's cut.

RUDI: Wow. Did anybody tape it?

BOOT: Not that I know of.

RUDI: Can you get a copy?

BOOT: I get the feeling that it will be on again. (a car honks) Woooo! Vote Green! I'll talk to the guy.

RUDI: (another car honks) Woooooooooooo! Honk your horns and sell your cars for scrap! Wooooo!

BOOT: Wooooo!

RUDI: Rudi and Boot hoot and carry on and interact a bit with the Greens and pedestrians and car people.)

BOOT: This is amazing. The way things are going, we could really... There is a lot of support for what we are saying.

(Boot starts to twirl a "signing tube" - or some other interesting noise-maker - and Rudi joins in. Rudi begins to ululate. This goes on for a bit, until it reminds Rudi of her news.)

RUDI: Hey, I got a call from Jarvis Kale. He wants to talk to me about fronting his band.

BOOT: Which band is that?

RUDI: Puke.

BOOT: That'll look good on your resume.

RUDI: They're pretty hardcore.

BOOT: What happened to their singer ... what's his name?

RUDI: Baff Baff.

BOOT: Right. Bam Bam reaches adolescence.

RUDI: I don't know, he quit, it didn't work out. I think he was mellowing out.

BOOT: And what they need is a young lunatic.

RUDI: Maybe he'll go solo. You know, Mellow Moments with Baff Baff.

BOOT: So you are interested?

RUDI: I'm interested in talking to Jarvis.

BOOT: Oh, it's him you're interested in.

RUDI: See what he has to say.

BOOT: He'll say do you want to front my band.

RUDI: Depends what it is. Incoherent screaming over a wall of noise I'm not that interested in. It's fun, but

it's going nowhere. It's been done to death. If he's interested in doing some tasty backdrops for some of my poems ...

BOOT: Yes, Puke is known for their tasty backdrops.

RUDI: Maybe they can do it, maybe they can't; we'll see.

BOOT: Get a good band and record "Now is the Time" for single. There's an idea.

RUDI: Puke is a pretty good band. Jarvis is good.

BOOT: Are you all set for taping tomorrow?

RUDI: All set?

BOOT: You're happy with the questions?

RUDI: Yeah, they're good questions.

BOOT: And what I wrote down for your answers, you're happy with that?

RUDI: That sounds something like what I said, yeah.

BOOT: It's pretty close.

RUDI: Yeah. It's good.

BOOT: Because don't forget, there's a time limit. And right after my intro, we'll start with the poem.

RUDI: Sounds good.

BOOT: So, we have a parade to marshal here - should we get this uprising on the move?

RUDI: Let's go.

BOOT: OK everybody. Hello. Can everybody just come in closer for a minute? (ad lib until they gather.) Thanks to everybody for coming out; we're ready to make our move. We'll go right along Dundas and up Wellington to the park and stop at the bandshell. Who has clocks? - OK, keep winding them back up as we walk. If you've got a horn, blow it, shake those signs, and here are three things you can yell: (He counts them out on his fingers.) This is your wake up call ... it's Friday night at 8 on cable ... We're the slime beneath you kitchen sink. No forget that last one. OK, everybody wind your clocks ... and every once in a while, we'll do the chant - follow Rudi and me: One two three
Rudi & BOOT:

This is your wake-up call

This is your wake-up call 123 4

(alarms on)

This is your wake-up call

This is your wake-up call (etc)

Boot continues the chant; Rudi adds overtop of it:

RUDI: Friday night at 8 on cable (wake-up call)

Friday night at 8 on cable (wake-up call)

~~~~~lighting change~~~~~

(They split at the back and circle the stage, picking up stools to create the studio in the front).

Scene 6 - The on-air room of the community TV station. They have already been seated, microphones have been clipped on and they're about to go on.

BOOT: Look at me when I ask you the question, then out at the camera while you answer, and then casually back to me as you end.

RUDI: Do they introduce me or do you?

BOOT: They do. They introduce the two of us, then I turn it over to you and you do the poem ... OK, I'm just waiting for the light. Rudi takes out a piece of paper.) What's that?

RUDI: It's a new poem.

BOOT: What for? (Rudi nods towards the camera, warning Boot that it's time.) Use the old poem. (the host

has introduced them; Boot addresses the live camera.) Thank you. The Green Party was formed to bring politics into the Age of Ecology. It is the only party that is fundamentally based on the idea that a sound economy must be based on a sound ecology. Now we'll go straight to the Greens' economic policies in our first question for your Green candidate, Rudi Kershaw.

RUDI: Yes, but before we do that, we thought that we'd kick off the green message with a poem.

BOOT: Yes, that's right. Our Green candidate is also a fine local poet, and she is going to recite a poem of her own called "Now is the Time".

RUDI: I think that a lot of people heard that one already on Speakers' Corner. I thought I'd read a new one that's more about the economic policies that you were just talking about.

BOOT: ...Great. The floor is yours.

RUDI: It's called "Whoever You Are".

(Rudi begins by reading, but as she gathers momentum, she recites by heart. By the end, she is very emphatic indeed.)

Now that you've cheated and stunk up the place,  
Now that my lungs have gone bad,  
Now that my water is bought by the case,  
And cancer is eating my Dad,

Now that the enemy runs the economy,  
Skimming the cream and fouling the nest,  
Killing the forests to make into newspapers,  
All for insulting our brightest and best,

I will oppose you,  
I will oppose you,  
Others will waffle but  
I will be awful,

I am the germ of the plague that will kill you!

(Rudi has come forward toward the camera with the climax of the poem. She ducks off to one side after her final word, leaving Boot alone, looking into the camera.)

BOOT: ...And what Rudi is trying to say with this ... dramatic performance ... to me ... is that we've all got to work together to make the good changes ... and it's a big job ... and it's all about new ideas and ancient ideas together, based on ecology ... and it's those bad old ideas of destruction and pollution that the Green Party is fighting against.

RUDI: And we're also fighting against the actual people who do the destroying and the polluting.

BOOT: Yes, but we want ...

RUDI: We hate them.

BOOT: But we want everyone to work with us on the change to a more positive future, because it's an ecologically sound feature or it's no future at all.

RUDI: No future for humans, anyway.

BOOT: So before you vote on Monday ...

RUDI: Didn't you want to mention children?

BOOT: Well, yes, of course, don't forget that children are more susceptible to a lot of this pollution, and this is pollution that we're subsidizing with our tax dollars, so ... think about the new generation. You know, these kids are ... Even if you've given up on yourself ... think of the kids. They're almost innocent, really. Well, relatively speaking, they are innocent, I'd say. So do it for the kids and for the world and for yourself ...

RUDI: And for other animals ...

BOOT: And for other animals. Vote for the Green Party. Vote for Rudi Kershaw this Monday.

RUDI: Other animals don't get to vote. (The host takes over. The camera is off. Boot looks at Rudi.) Not bad. (She looks at the paper.) The poem needs a little work.

~~~~~lighting change~~~~~

Scene 7 - Boot goes off. We hear a phone ringing (through a phone line, as the caller hears it). Rudi picks up the prop phone - she is the caller

BOOT: (recorded message) Hello. You have reached the campaign headquarters for Rudi Kershaw, your Green party candidate for London North Centre. This is the environmental turn-around election, so let's support the Greens and let those parliamentarians know where we stand. Please leave a message after the tone.

RUDI: Hi Boot. It's Rudi. I still haven't heard from you, so I guess you're not going out tonight to watch the results come in. Ah ... let me know. Give me a call. I'm getting together with Jarvis around seven to talk about this music thing, and I'll probably swing by the Whippet later - see if they have the coverage on TV. So. Don't forget, if I win, I'll be an elected official. I'll need a right-hand man to help with my duties. So send me your resume. Anyway, I'd better go. If I don't see you tonight, maybe I'll meet you after work tomorrow. For my milkshake, I'll try 3/4 strawberry and 1/4 chocolate. And put a little root beer in it. Just a splash. See you soon.

~~~~~lighting change~~~~~

Scene 8 - Boot is at work. He is serving the last customer of his shift. It's the day after the vote.

BOOT: And that's 2.23 change.

(Can I get some napkins?)

Uh, there are your napkins right there.

(Can I get some more?)

Well, there are about six there;hould do you, shouldn't it?

(No, I need way more than that.)

What are you going to do, make a shirt out of them?

(I just want some napkins. You don't have to get ...)

OK, look, there are napkin dispensers all over this restaurant. If you get more, I guess I won't call the police, or try to tackle you or anything, but six napkins is plenty, and I'm not giving you any more.

(I'm a regular customer here ...)

(leaving) I know.

(...and I could report you to the main office)

Yeah, well, you do what you have to do.

(Don't think that I won't do it ...)

Sure. You fight for your right to use napkins.

He leaves work as before, and as before, he finds Rudi waiting for him. No milkshakes.

RUDI: Hi.

BOOT: Hi.

RUDI: ... We didn't win.

BOOT: Yeah, I heard.

RUDI: Good idea, though. Fun while it lasted.

BOOT: Well, there's always Rudi and the Pukes to fall back on.

RUDI: Yeah, well, I don't know. Jarvis is sort of into practicing, and I said one meeting / one gig, you know, so he's not sure. He's thinking about it. I told him to call me when there was a gig lined up. (beat) So we'll see. (beat) Did you want to go down to the Forks?

BOOT: No, it's all so leafy and organic down there; I don't want to get too used to that sort of thing.

RUDI: You gotta fight for it.

BOOT: Nah, I'll just get a photo of it.

RUDI: Yeah, right.

BOOT: Nobody wants it.

RUDI: Sure they do.

BOOT: No they don't. They say they do, but they're liars.

RUDI: It's not what they say; it's what they feel.

BOOT: It doesn't matter what they feel; it's what they do.

RUDI: What they do depends on ...

BOOT: Who cares what they feel? They watch TV - there's lots of good nature footage for them out there, enough to last forever. That's the consolation prize of the 20th century; we screwed up the world, but we documented it really well.

So how does everybody feel about that? Who cares? They show you nice nature pictures and you feel good, they show you some of the destruction and you feel bad, they hand out a few environmental awards, bring out the nice nature footage and you feel good again. Feelings don't mean diddley-doink.

RUDI: Can I quote you on that?

BOOT: What you do, that's ...

RUDI: I'm not familiar with that technical term you used, "diddley-doink"?

BOOT: It's a religious issue, really.

RUDI: Religious.

BOOT: Yeah. Whatever you do - that's your religion. You look at computer and TV screens all day - that's your religion. You spend your time and energy cruising for hookers - that's your religion. You look after your kids - that's your religion. So generally, what do people do?

RUDI: They sin, horribly.

BOOT: No, you look around; what do you see?

RUDI: Horrible, horrible sinners.

BOOT: People think that nature is nice, sure. But nature isn't their religion. It isn't even part of it.

RUDI: Hey, we got 568 votes.

BOOT: Money. That's the biggie. And cheap thrills.

RUDI: And how many people beyond that 568 gave it some thought? I bet lots of people went from a little bit Green up to sort of Green. That doesn't show up in the voting tally, but it's real.

BOOT: The Church of Money and Cheap Thrills.

RUDI: You like money. You like cheap thrills, too.

BOOT: Add a smattering of self-importance, and that about covers it.

RUDI: 568 votes is not bad.

BOOT: I'm sick of this place. You know that poem, "The Damage Machine"? If I could just find that one place in the Damage Machine - that one critical gear that it all depends upon - if I knew where that one place was, I'd throw myself right into it. I would.

(pause)

But there is no critical gear. There is no big shiny button...

(pause)

That's the big lie of Star wars - that some little adolescent dink on a space bicycle can fire a shot and hit the big shiny button and POW! The whole Death Star turns into space debris. And we all feel good about it. Then he goes home and wins the girl.

RUDI: He didn't win the girl.

BOOT: Good.

RUDI: Maybe you need to take a little break for a while ... I don't know ... but when you're ready to do another gig, I have a pretty good idea.

BOOT: Like I will ever trust you ever to ever do another gig ever.

RUDI: ...That's a lot of evers.

BOOT: Yep.

RUDI: A lot of passion too.

BOOT: Shut up.

RUDI: Now, what we have to do here is re-build some trust.

BOOT: It ain't gonna happen.

RUDI: The question is why. Why do you feel at this moment as though you cannot trust me?

BOOT: Take a guess.

RUDI: ...The poem?

BOOT: Oh my God, what's this? A flicker of ... what? Self-consciousness? Guilt?...

RUDI: OK, so the poem.

BOOT: "I thought I'd read a new poem."

RUDI: He expected one poem. He got another poem. And this was upsetting. Like my nephew when his little routines get disturbed.

BOOT: Can't you just feel the trust building back by the second?

RUDI: Let's deal with it and move on.

BOOT: There was a plan. Plans change, fine. But you don't just change everything without telling the other person.

RUDI: (pause) Well, my thinking on the matter is a little different. As you can imagine. Now. Whose turn was it?

BOOT: I'm not even going to ...

RUDI: Let's say it was your turn, OK? (beat) Well, your gig was Speakers' Corner, right?

BOOT: That was you, doing one of your poems.

RUDI: But it wasn't my idea. Right? Then the alarm clocks; that was your idea. I thought, well, this is getting a little one-sided, so I took the liberty of having some input of my own.

BOOT: We made a plan for the whole campaign ...

RUDI: With you hogging three major gigs.

BOOT: Why didn't you just say something about it??

RUDI: ...I'm kind of shy sometimes ... OK, I should have mentioned it, really. But it was kind of last-minute

...

BOOT: Here's the deal, then - we'll go by your reckoning - the Speakers' Corner gig was mine, the parade was mine, the TV spot was yours, and you are penalized one gig for being the way you are. So it's my turn and I say that we take this garbage here and start throwing it around (He does so.) so that people can truly live in their own filth. No more exporting leachate.

RUDI: OK, wait, you're just messing the place up.

BOOT: No, it'll change their thinking.

RUDI: It's just a mess.

BOOT: That's my gig.

RUDI: (She starts arranging the garbage into a form.) OK, but I'll make a design out of it, so that people will at least know that ...

BOOT: (kicks it apart) No, it's just a mess. De it; we look at it.

RUDI: This is purely negative. Nobody will get anything from it.

BOOT: That's my gig.

RUDI: (She starts putting garbage back into a bag.) OK, and now my gig is to slap on a happy attitude and clean up the mess that some people leave.

BOOT: (He grabs the bag from her and empties it) And my gig is to empty out another bag.

RUDI: She pushes some garbage into a pile, using her hands and feet) And my gig is to pile this garbage into the corner, all nice and neat ...

BOOT: (He plows through the pile) And my gig is to mess up all the piles I see.

RUDI: And my gig is to continue on in spite of all hardships. (She does.)

BOOT: And my gig is to make you see the futility of your actions.

RUDI: (stops him) And my gig (hands him an empty bag) is to pick all of this garbage (indicates it all) leave the bags here ... and then go down to the Forks. We haven't been there since the campaign started.

(Rudi starts picking up garbage. Boot watches her. Then he picks up an old running shoe)

~~~~~lights fade to black~~~~~

THE END

Production notes: This play was written so that many of the props and all of the characters other than Rudi and Boot can be provided by the audience's imagination. In the original production, the following real props were used:

Scene 1 - camera

Scene 2 - milkshake containers (probably re-usable, knowing these two) (Boot could have a hat at work)

Scene 3 - paper with poem on it.

Scene 5 - 2 alarm clocks (optional instruments, noisemakers and signs)

Scene 6 - 2 stools or chairs and another poem on paper

Scene 7 - prop phone (handpiece only)

Scene 8 - a few bags of garbage

SUBTERRAIN Production Notes and Disclaimer

SUBTERRAIN was originally performed by Original Kids at the 2001 London Fringe Theatre Festival. It was done in mask, each character having very distinctive, exaggerated features. There was no real set, just an open space with multiple exits. There are fifteen characters in the piece, which were performed by ten actors. The most logical doubling of roles is suggested in the list of characters. There are a few moments where we hear the moans and howls of a creature called The Taurine echoing through the tunnels; these were done live by the actor portraying the beast. There are two occasions where the actor playing The Taurine is onstage as Turnkey while the beast is to howl; we compensated for this by having another actor (specifically the actor playing Tactic) perform those howls.

With one exception (specifically Touchstone, the King), the characters in this piece might be played either as male or female. Companies are encouraged to gender cast as they see fit, but the author cautions that careful attention should be paid to changing or rearranging pronouns and titles (he, she, her, Queen, King, etc.)

The world of SUBTERRAIN is an amalgamation of ideas, philosophies and inventions from various world cultures, and the production details should reflect the fact that the Tunnel Dwellers' world has been handed down through many generations, and many cultural and technological facets have degenerated, transmogrified, merged or been forgotten. Much of the science and technology has become so vague and mysterious to the general public that it has become magic.

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SUBTERRAIN

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

TURNKEY, a gatekeeper (THE TAURINE)
TASK, a universal servant
THEORY, a politico-philosopher
THEOLOGUE, a counselor priest
TILTHAMMER, a labour mediator (TALLYMAN)
TATTERDEMALION, a nomad (TACTIC)
TOUCHSTONE, a dying king (TERMINUS)
TENTATOR, a mechanical scientist
TERMINUS, a product of science (TOUCHSTONE)
TALLYMAN, a censor (TILTHAMMER)
TACTIC, a soldier (TATTERDEMALION)
TRIBUNE, a messenger (TOURNIQUET)
TALION, a judge
TOURNIQUET, a doctor-surgeon (TRIBUNE)
THE TAURINE, a myth (TURNKEY)

(A dim light grows, becoming warmer. From the wings, an escalating cacophony of percussion. Enter the Inner Court: TOUCHSTONE, THEOLOGUE, THEORY, TENTATOR, TACTIC, and TALION. They beat and play instruments of unknown origin. Hot on their heels are subordinates: TURNKEY, TRIBUNE, TASK and TALLYMAN, all concerned about the condition of the king. TOUCHSTONE waves them all quiet. He is irritated, sickly, frightened. He slumps into his throne. The others begin to speak around him. Their speech is quick and clipped.)

THEOLOGUE: A soothing beverage, my liege?

THEORY: Perhaps a foot rub.

TACTIC: What he needs is a good strong drink.

TOUCHSTONE: What we need is for you to stop prattling!

THEOLOGUE: My lord, do you think it might be time to call for Tourniquet?

TOUCHSTONE: No doctors! We're perfectly fine.

TALION: He's perfectly fine.

TASK: Perfectly fine-

TURNKEY: Perfectly fine-

TALLYMAN: He's perfectly fine!

TOUCHSTONE: We are perfectly fine! We are still King, you know!

TALION: Absolutely.

TURNKEY: Absolutely.

TALLYMAN: Absolutely!

TALION: Absolutely. Your present condition, my lord, being perfectly fine, has no bearing on your ability to govern.

THEOLOGUE: Absolutely. However, being aware as I am of your present condition, my lord, that is to say, perfectly fine, I cannot help but suggest we either call for the doctor or begin with the last rights.

TOUCHSTONE: Stuff your last rights!

(TOUCHSTONE lapses into a pathetic siege of coughing, at the end of which there is a brief silence. And then:)

TRIBUNE: Perfectly fine!

TASK: Perfectly fine!

TALLYMAN: Perfectly fine!

TALION: You see? He's perfectly fine. Lovely weather today, nice fresh breeze through the tunnels...Theologue, Theory, a moment of your time.

(TALION, THEOLOGUE AND THEORY step forward to converse in private. TENTATOR strains to hear, but tries to be inconspicuous.)

TALION: Friends, I'm afraid the king is on his last leg.

THEORY: He's on his last toe.

TALION: Quite. Which presents us with something of a problem.

THEOLOGUE: He has no heir.

TALION: Precisely. There is no contingent course of action in the Book of Law, should the king die without an heir.

THEOLOGUE: A kingdom without a king?

THEORY: Well, now, isn't that something.

THEOLOGUE: How could there be no law concerning such a plausible turn of events?

TALION: It's never come up before...

THEOLOGUE: Well couldn't we write a new law?

TALION: Not without the king's approval.

THEORY: But the king is convinced that he's not dying.

THEOLOGUE: Yes, and while I am a fierce proponent of the power of positive thinking, with all due respect,

the man is seconds away from the final curtain.

TALION: Any suggestions?

(The three spend a moment deep in thought, and then rush back to TOUCHSTONE en masse.)

TOUCHSTONE: Quit buzzing about!

THEOLOGUE: My lord, ehrrmm...loathe as I am to trouble your great person with matters of trite concern, I must nevertheless seek your counsel regarding a bit of a legal issue.

TOUCHSTONE: Leave us alone!

TALION:

As you are well aware, my lord, your great person has, for reasons which are no business of the rest of us, failed to produce an heir to the throne.

THEORY: And apparently there is no law in the book to decide our course of action ...if ...you were to...suddenly...(TO THE OTHERS)...help me...

THEOLOGUE: ...er, in the unlikely event of your untimely passing, for example-

TASK: Perfectly fine!

THEOLOGUE: --we would be at a terrific loss, my lord, to determine what to do exactly, with regard to preserving the patriarchy.

TOUCHSTONE: Oh. Right. Well. Somebody bear our child, quickly!

(Silence. Everyone moves subtly away from the king.)

TOUCHSTONE: Oh, it doesn't matter! We are king! We shall always be king! We're perfectly fine!

TALION: Perfectly fine!

TASK: Perfectly fine!

TRIBUNE: Perfectly fine!

TACTIC: Perfectly fine!

(TOUCHSTONE lapses into another fit of hacking and wheezing. He sways and shuffles. TALION attempts to help him stand, but is pushed aside with surprising force by the king. THEOLOGUE makes a hand gesture to TASK, TRIBUNE and TALLYMAN, and the three exit to find the doctor. THEOLOGUE claps her hands together.)

THEOLOGUE: Well! Shall we pray?

TOUCHSTONE: Shut it! Shut it up tight!

THEOLOGUE: Your will be done, my lord.

TOUCHSTONE: Away! Away and hence! We wish to be alone!

(TOUCHSTONE has another coughing fit and collapses.)

TOUCHSTONE: Perfectly fine...

TALION: My lord, it would behoove us all if you would be so large, seeing as how death could strike any one of us at any moment of any day, to appoint a de facto king from those assembled on the off-chance that you do not produce an heir before your untimely departure from this world.

TOUCHSTONE: There shall be no king but us.

THEOLOGUE: But what are we to do if you should die, my lord, before an heir is produced?

TOUCHSTONE: You shall have us stuffed and mounted. We shall always be with you. Death shall have no dominion.

THEOLOGUE: ...right.

(TOUCHSTONE collapses. TALION and THEOLOGUE rush to his side.)

TALION: Speak to us, my lord!

TOUCHSTONE: Hie thee hence, worm! Touch not the royal figure!

TALION: He's rambling...

TOUCHSTONE: You are! You're the rambler!

TALION: Yes, of course, my lord.

(TOUCHSTONE has a horrible hacking fit.)

TOUCHSTONE: (WEAK) This changes nothing, you know. We are still king.

TALION: Yes, of course.

(Enter TALLYMAN with TOURNIQUET.)

TOURNIQUET: Alright, the doctor is in. Step aside. Aside!

TALION: He's been coughing up a lot of things.

TOURNIQUET: I said stay in bed, my lord!

TOUCHSTONE: (WEAK) You stay in bed...

TOURNIQUET: You shouldn't be out of bed. Why do you people never listen to me? I am a doctor, you know! Oh, there's no time for complaining. Leeches! Bring me leeches! This man's blood is bad, bad, bad! It must be let!

(TURNKEY exits to find leeches.)

TOUCHSTONE: (WEAK) Do not drain the royal blood...

TOURNIQUET: Relax, my lord, I'm a doctor.

THEOLOGUE: Shall I begin the last rights?

TOURNIQUET: Don't crowd me, Theologue!

TALION: Will he live, doctor?

TOURNIQUET: It's a little premature to be making pat diagnoses. But I'm afraid it doesn't look good. He's fading fast.

THEORY: What a shame.

TOURNIQUET: If only I knew the source of this wasting sickness...my lord! Can you feel anything moving around inside you? Like a dwarf for example? My lord? Touchstone?

(A palpable silence as TOURNIQUET checks the king's pulse.)

TOURNIQUET: The king is dead.

(A silence. Then, TURNKEY rushes in, his arm covered with leeches.)

TURNKEY: I've got leeches!

TOURNIQUET: It's too late. You've allowed the him to die..

TURNKEY: L...L...L...

THEOLOGUE: It is a sad day in the kingdom. But the name of Touchstone shall forever more echo through the tunnels, and through our hearts. And through the grace of Godna, may his spirit ascend to the bright and hallowed halls of Heavensgaard. Tallyman, you may record the event.

TALLYMAN:

(WRITING IN A LARGE BOOK.) A death. T-class. Touchstone. Vocation: king. Recorded this day seventeen-twenty-one-fifty-five. New T-class population: forty-four. New Tunnel population: one thousand, six hundred forty-four. Rest in Peace.

THEOLOGUE: You may remove the great person for internment.

(TACTIC and TALLYMAN exit with the king.)

THEOLOGUE: This is a grim day for all Tunnel Dwellers. With the death of our beloved king, we look to our future without him in sadness. But we shall continue on. And since our great patriarch has left us no successor, it is with great solemnity and reverence that I, Theologue, take up the royal sceptre and assume the responsibility of kingship. Godna's will be done.

(THEORY laughs.)

THEOLOGUE: Please, Theory. It is too soon after our beloved king's departure for us to be making merry.

THEORY: I'm laughing at you.

THEOLOGUE: You find me amusing somehow?

THEORY: It is with great solemnity and reverence that you assume the responsibility of kingship.

THEOLOGUE: Yes. I fully understand the responsibilities and duties thereof, and shall endeavour to fulfill those duties to the best of my ability. Godna's will be done.

THEORY: Oh, shut up! Godna's will? Everybody knows that there is no Godna.

(A collective gasp from those assembled.)

THEORY: Oh, come on. As if you all haven't had the same idea. Honestly.

THEOLOGUE: Do you mean to suggest that Godna is not your creator? That he did not build these great tunnels, and make the air that you breathe?

THEORY: That's right.

THEOLOGUE: And therefore you feel that my claim to the throne is unfounded.

THEORY: Precisely.

THEOLOGUE: I suppose you think you would make a better king.

THEORY: Not at all. Actually, I'd much prefer to see someone like Turnkey on the throne.

TURNKEY: Oh, no thank you.

THEORY: But then, why bother filling a station that serves no real function?

TALION: Come now, come now.

THEORY: Think about it. All of you. Touchstone is dead! No more temper tantrums. No more spontaneous lawmaking. No forced tributes, no boring kingly rituals, no kowtowing, no overseeing eye whatsoever! This is a unique opportunity for us.

THEOLOGUE: Stop! This is blasphemy!

THEORY: You must see it as well as I do. We could have an autonomous ruling body. We could make our own rules for ourselves as we see fit.

THEOLOGUE: And what of the lower letters, eh? Do you honestly believe they will wish to support your "autonomous government?"

THEORY: I'm not suggesting a unilateral political freedom across the board. But each letter could be assigned a specific number of votes, according to station and numbers.

THEOLOGUE: There are sixteen hundred of them and forty-four of us. As soon as word leaks out about the king's demise, our days as the ruling class of The Tunnels are over!

THEORY: Then we'll be free! Free as the breeze! Free to journey, to live!

TALION: Journey?

THEORY: Yes-journey.

TALION: You mean...holiday?

THEORY: Sort of. We have grown complacent, my friends. Fat. Uninspired. Life is a never-ending parade of stale ideas and boring conversations. Whatever happened to our great age of exploration and discovery? Was it so long ago that we revered and respected the G-Class for their expansionist policies?

THEOLOGUE: Pfffft! And where are they now? Dead!

THEORY: Not dead, Theologue. Gone. Vanished. Without a trace.

TALION: In the tunnels.

THEORY: During the G-Class years, our maps of the tunnels expanded two-fold.

THEOLOGUE: Touchstone has declared a moratorium on all expansionist activities!

THEORY: Touchstone is dead!

THEOLOGUE: So is G-Class!

THEORY: I don't believe that.

TALION: What do you believe?

THEORY: I believe they live still. And their children live.

TALION: Where?

THEORY: Beyond. In the place of our ancestors. Beyond the tunnels, in the world above.
(A general commotion arises.)

THEOLOGUE: The world above! Ha ha ha ha! And you mock me for my faith in Godna!
(TATTERDEMALION enters, unnoticed.)

THEORY: I believe it exists.

TALION: A children' fable.

THEORY: Based on history.

THEOLOGUE: Stuff and nonsense.

THEORY: There is one way to know for sure. We must explore.

TALION: Are you suggesting that we should...venture beyond the map's periphery?

THEORY: I am indeed. If we truly are leaders, then we owe it to the people to confirm or deny the existence of the world above.

TATTERDEMALION: There's a fresh idea.

 (Commotion as everyone notices TATTERDEMALION's appearance.)

TALION: Well! As I live and breathe, it's the happy wanderer.

THEOLOGUE: You have abandoned your family, Tatterdemalion. You have no right to be here.

TATTERDEMALION: I'm sorry to cause you distress, Theologue.

THEOLOGUE: We've no time for your tomfoolery, we are in the middle of a crisis.

TOURNIQUET: Touchstone is dead.

TATTERDEMALION: I noticed his absence. My condolences.

THEOLOGUE: Don't pretend to care, you're not fooling anyone.

TATTERDEMALION: I don't pretend to care. My concern is for the well being of my family. You are grieving. But you might want to cut it short. I've some disturbing news.

TALION: What. What news.

TATTERDEMALION: I've...been through the tunnels. This way and that, turning and bending, twisting back on themselves, ending in nothing. But...there are a few paths that go on, and on, and on. There are areas of the Tunnels that are vast and deep and high and quiet as death. And it is in one of these areas that I heard the most frightening sound.

 (Dead silence.)

TALION: What sound.

TATTERDEMALION: The most bloodcurdling howl. A moan of emptiness and hunger.

TOURNIQUET: What was it?

TATTERDEMALION: The Taurine. He's returned.

 (Commotion.)

TALION: You suggest the ludicrous.

TATTERDEMALION: I know what I heard.

THEOLOGUE: You heard the echo of an empty mind. You've been wandering around the black tunnels too long.

TATTERDEMALION: Perhaps you're right, Theologue. Perhaps I was hearing things.

THEOLOGUE: Most certainly you were.

TATTERDEMALION: I've been seeing things also.

TURNKEY: You saw it?

TATTERDEMALION: Only a shadow on the wall. It was as close as I cared to get.

THEORY: How can you be sure?

TATTERDEMALION: What else could it have been?

THEOLOGUE: An animal of some sort. There are a great many wandering about. Who knows what could be lurking around out there.

TATTERDEMALION: We've yet to see one that stands on two legs. Or one with great horns curling up from its brow. It is gigantic.

THEORY: ...it isn't real, Tatter...The Taurine is just a story...

TATTERDEMALION: Tell that to the beast that shuffles and howls its way through the black tunnels.

THEOLOGUE: Why are we listening to this drivel? The man is obviously mad.

TOURNIQUET: I think I ought to have a look at your head, Tatterdemalion.

TATTERDEMALION: There's nothing wrong with my head. I trust my senses implicitly.

TOURNIQUET: It won't take a second, we have the leeches handy...

TATTERDEMALION: I have come to tell you all what I have seen and heard because I felt an obligation

as a tunnel dweller. Whether you choose to believe or disbelieve is of no consequence to me.

THEORY: Perhaps it was something else that you saw.

TATTERDEMALION: That's right. Hide behind your wall of fear. You are all blind and deaf.

TURNKEY: But we sure can talk!

TATTERDEMALION: Yes. Well, now that I've said my piece, I'll be leaving.

TOURNIQUET: See you in another five or ten years.

TATTERDEMALION: If the Taurine doesn't get you all first.
(THEOLOGUE laughs derisively.)

THEORY: (ASIDE) Wait-Tatter-before you leave...

TATTERDEMALION: What.

THEORY: How far have you been?

TATTERDEMALION: Further than anyone.

THEORY: The outside...the world above...is it real? Have you found it?

TATTERDEMALION: I've been focusing more on the world inside, Theory. But...there are indications. Changing lighting conditions...beautiful, colourful winged animals...

THEORY: Where? Where will we see these things?

TATTERDEMALION: Where you don't want to go.

THEORY: I'll go anywhere.

TATTERDEMALION: Then you must go to the Taurine's cave. That's where the world changes.

THEORY: But...there is no Taurine...

TATTERDEMALION: Then there is no world above.
(Silence. TASK enters. Everyone turns to look at TASK as he speaks.
TATTERDEMALION slips out unnoticed.)

TASK: Well, I can't find the doctor. I think he must be sampling his curatives again.
(TASK sees the doctor.)

TASK: Oh, hi. We were just talking about you.
(A brief pause.)

TASK: Okay, now who died?

TURNKEY: Tatterdemalion was just telling us-where'd he go?
(Everyone notices TATTERDEMALION's absence.)

TALION: Like the wind.

TASK: Tatterdemalion was here?

TURNKEY: He said he saw The Taurine.

TASK: The Taurine!

THEOLOGUE: Relax, my frightened lamb. He was raving. He is a lunatic.

THEORY: What if he speaks the truth?

TALION: I've never known him to do otherwise.

THEOLOGUE: Don't be ridiculous.

THEORY: Okay, so what if it wasn't The Taurine? What if it was something just as dangerous...something without a name...something we haven't seen?

THEOLOGUE: What of it? If it was desiring of company, it would have come to the family picnics.

TOURNIQUET: We don't know how far the tunnels stretch out. It could have been moving inwards the whole time.

THEORY: In which case, it will arrive on our doorstep eventually.

TOURNIQUET: That's right. Then we'll all be meat for the beast.

THEOLOGUE: Don't you have some doctoring to do?

TOURNIQUET: As a matter of fact I do. Tailor's come down with a bit of ...ennui. I don't want to alarm anyone...but we may be facing an epidemic. An epidemic of slothful indifference which could completely immobilize our entire civilization.
(Silence.)

TOURNIQUET: I'll just go see if I can't prevent that from happening. I am a doctor, you know.
(TOURNIQUET exits.)

TURNKEY: I hope the Taurine doesn't get him on his way to Tailor's...

TASK: There could be lots of them!

THEOLOGUE: So what exactly are we to do about it? Scream a lot and tear out our hair?

THEORY: We have to hunt it out. See for ourselves whether or not it's a threat.

THEOLOGUE: That's madness.

TURNKEY: Theory's right. We should break out the weapons and form a search party.

TASK: I'll tell everybody what's going on-

TALION: I'll go and get my walking shoes on--

THEOLOGUE: Everyone just remain exactly where they are!

THEORY: What are you afraid of, Theologue?

THEOLOGUE: I fear this mob mentality.

THEORY: You would have us sit around and wait for it to come crashing in?

THEOLOGUE: This isn't about the Taurine, or whatever it is. This is about your quest for Milk-and-Cuckoo Land.

THEORY: If I'm wrong, I'm wrong. But how can we live without knowing? We could be missing out on a million wonders!

THEOLOGUE: Godna provides us with all that we need. In return, we need only be faithful to him.

THEORY: Oh, stuff Godna.

TALION: Careful, Theory. Godna hears all.

THEORY: (YELLING) Stuff Godna!
(In the distance, a barely audible moan.)

TASK: I'm thinking that was the wind...

TURNKEY: This one time, my friend Tack, he went down the east end, real close to the black tunnels...and he says he saw a dog that had its head ripped clean off and jammed between the bars of the gates. And the guts were all over the floor, and he slipped in 'em, and he was wearing Toggle's new pants-

THEOLOGUE: Enough.

TALION: Perhaps most of you are too young to remember the incident in the Merchant Quarter, twenty or twenty-five years ago. Tailor remembers it...he can tell you...he arrived early, as he always does, as all the merchants do...but the place was a graveyard. Nothing but wind through the tunnels. Families assumed their loved ones had gone to work that day...but no trace of any of them was ever found. Fourteen disappearances, all told.

TASK: No trace at all?

TALION: Well...they found some footprints...but no footprints like you've ever seen. Sort of like a cow...but twice the size. A two-legged creature.

THEOLOGUE: That's a nice ghost story, Talion.

TALION: Tallyman has the incident recorded in his ledgers. Ask him.

TURNKEY: This thing has been with us that whole time?

TASK: How many others have gone missing?

THEORY: A few, here and there, through the years.

THEOLOGUE: Lost down some tunnel they were never meant to traverse.

THEORY: We have to know. Can we afford to assume these people met some grisly end? Who's to say they're not up there somewhere, enjoying themselves, waiting for us to join them?

THEOLOGUE: Why would they not return for the rest of us, hm?

TURNKEY: Might have had something to do with Touchstone's "No Return" policy.

TASK: Find your way back, lose your head.

THEORY: Well that policy is no longer applicable. Task, gather the others. There's no time like the present.

THEOLOGUE: Stay right where you are, Task. No one is going anywhere.

THEORY: You can't stop us, Theo.

THEOLOGUE: Alright. Alright! If it has come down to this, then we must vote. That's how your "autonomous government" is supposed to work, isn't it?

THEORY: That's right. We'll vote on it.

THEOLOGUE: Tribune!

(TRIBUNE instantly appears.)

THEOLOGUE: Tell the other T-Class citizens that we are to have a vote. We must all decide whether we wish to remain here, in the Tunnels, under a Theocracy-in the spirit of Touchstone and his predecessors, of course-or venture forth in search of the farcical "world above" with Theory and her puerile notions.

TRIBUNE: Check.

(TRIBUNE zips off.)

THEORY: I'm proud of you, Theologue.

THEOLOGUE: Don't make this any worse than it is. Anyway, I wouldn't have suggested it if I didn't think the majority would feel the same as I.

THEORY: We'll see about that. It's all in the name of progress, you know.

THEOLOGUE: Progress is a cheap and flashy distraction from the things that matter. Except for that twin-bladed cutting implement that Tentator designed recently. Very handy, that.

TENTATOR: Thank you.

THEOLOGUE: We shall meet back here in three hours.

THEORY: I'll be here with bells on.

TASK: And I'll wear a fancy cape!

TURNKEY: Maybe we should decorate...

(All wander off except TENTATOR.)

TENTATOR: Task.

(TASK stops in mid-stride.)

TENTATOR: And just where do you think you're going, my little toolbox?

TASK: I thought I'd have a little nap and then perhaps read some scripture.

TENTATOR: Don't get any funny ideas. We're not going anywhere, you or I. We have work to do.

TASK: I can't tell you how thrilled I am to hear that.

TENTATOR: This is the perfect opportunity to attempt my greatest experiment.

TASK: Which one is that?

TENTATOR: Oh you'll see. It's a little grisly, but it's all in the name of science.

TASK: Are you talking about meat?

TENTATOR: Sort of...I don't like the way this is all heading, Task. There is a sequence of events set in motion that threatens to disrupt our way of life forever. The funding of my work is in jeopardy. Believe it or not, there are some among us who feel my efforts are somewhat...superfluous.

TASK: No!

TENTATOR: Oh yes.

TASK: Even the thing that spins around real fast and shoots out sparks and makes a lot of racket?

TENTATOR: Yes, even that. It's interesting you should bring that up. This crisis is very like the Friction Spinner. Touchstone's death was the event that set the toy in motion. Big noise, a flurry of motion-but what happens when the Spinner runs out of momentum?

TASK: It falls over. And more often than not, it breaks.

TENTATOR: That's right. When all is said and done, this hubbub will break us all apart. It will destroy our world. We cannot allow that to happen.

TASK: So you're voting for the Theocracy.

TENTATOR: Please! I am a woman of science.

TASK: So what are you going to vote for, then?

TENTATOR: I'm voting for nothing. I'm taking action. We're going to return everything to the way it was.

TASK: You're going to build a time machine!

TENTATOR: I'm going to restore the king to life.

TASK: Wait a minute...is this science, or evil?

TENTATOR: Good, evil, black, white, they're all just colours on a palette, my little bat.

TASK: I'll see if I can't dig up the king, then.

TENTATOR: Very intuitive. Tell no one what you're doing. Don't be seen.

TASK: I do have some measure of self-respect, professor.

TENTATOR: So long as it doesn't interfere with my work, that's terrific.

(They exit. Percussive noise. THEOLOGUE enters with TACTIC.)

THEOLOGUE: ...I'm so glad you see things my way, Tactic. As Captain of The Guard, you have a great responsibility to your people.

TACTIC: I've always thought so.

THEOLOGUE: The people look up to you...as a keeper of the peace. They'll expect you to help bring some sense into this matter.

TACTIC: I can barely make sense of it myself.

THEOLOGUE: That's not important, so long as you appear to know what's going on. Now, a man in your position can really influence the way this vote turns out.

TACTIC: In what way?

THEOLOGUE: Well...you could...persuade our fellows. That it would be in their best interests to vote for the Theocracy. Persuade them. Cajole them. Coerce them. Force them. Do what you have to, but make sure we retain the upper hand in this.

TACTIC: If it is Godna's will...shouldn't we just have faith that everything will work out?

THEOLOGUE: Umm...technically, yes. But Godna works in mysterious ways. Through you, for example.

TACTIC: I see.

THEOLOGUE: I knew you would. Begin your campaign...but try and be subtle about it.

TACTIC: You'd like me to keep the arm-breaking to a minimum.

THEOLOGUE: If at all possible.

TACTIC: Done.

THEOLOGUE: Excellent.

TACTIC: Tell me again about this "Deputy King" position you're thinking of instating...

(THEOLOGUE and TACTIC exit. Percussion. Laughter and noise as THEORY enters with TURNKEY, TOURNIQUET and TILTHAMMER.)

THEORY: The wind whistles victory, my friends.

TURNKEY: There's still a whole lot of shoulder-shrugging going on.

THEORY: Ah, but with the support of the good doctor here, and Tilthammer, popular opinion is bound to sway in our favour.

TURNKEY: Well Tourniquet's not much of a doctor.

THEORY: But she is the Doctor General.

TOURNIQUET: Which makes me something of a celebrity.

THEORY: And Tilthammer is the Labour Leader. Amongst the lower letters, he's known as the King of The Horses.

TILTHAMMER: Aye, me and my hammer. We gets the job done.

THEORY: Tell them about the labour crisis of last year.

TILTHAMMER: Aye, we got that job done, d'in' we? Had us rebuilding the ministry district, 'round the clock. Lost a few hands in the haste of it all. I said, "we got to slow down, or we'll all be stumpy invalids and the job won't get done." Next thing ye know, Task has sent down a couple handfuls of goons to try and force the men back to work. Well, I just lifted my hammer and said, "first horse lifts a finger to these ministry walls loses his wits for good."

THEORY: And then he brings down his hammer against the Ministry of Correction for good measure

and puts a fourteen foot crack in the wall! You should have seen the faces. Like a sea of ghosts.

TILTHAMMER: Aye, 't'were creepy. Silence like the womb.

TURNKEY: Then what happened?

TILTHAMMER: Well, then, the leader of the goon squad, he's an S-Class, right, so he thinks he something special, Soldier I believe he's called, he pipes up. He says, "Touchstone has decreed that the labour must continue, word, word, word," and so on, makin' this bloody great speech to nobody in particular. And he finishes off by sayin' he's not afraid of the Tilthammer. Well, at that point I figured an education was in order 'bout how things work in the lower tunnels. I says,

TILTHAMMER: (CONTINUED)

"Touchstone's law becomes request at that gate you fellas just passed through." Then I knocks a couple of nuts with me hammer, piles 'em all up on a slab of rock and personally delivers them to the gate of the palace. Never heard another peep out of the lot of 'em.

(General laughter.)

TURNKEY: Well, once Tactic gathers up the whole of the guard, your men might start dancing to a different drum.

TILTHAMMER: My horses run with me, Turnkey. Have no fear.

THEORY: Our great adventure is in the air, friends. I can feel it. Now we talk to the governmental ministers.

TOURNIQUET: Why not talk to the sheep instead? It would be just as productive...

THEORY: Everyone deserves an education, Tourniquet. Onward!

(Exeunt. Percussive noise. TASK enters, dragging the shrouded body of TOUCHSTONE behind her.

TALLYMAN enters.)

TALLYMAN: Good ee'en, Task.

TASK: Sorry? Who is?

TALLYMAN: I said good ee'en.

TASK: Right. It is. Yes. You're right.

TALLYMAN: How goes the labouring?

TASK: Oh...you know...sweaty...

TALLYMAN: What you got there?

TASK: Hm?

TALLYMAN: The great burden...what is that?

TASK: What...this? Oh, this...just a bit of laundry.

TALLYMAN: Ah.

TASK: Laundry.

TALLYMAN: I suppose the hour grows near for our voting.

TASK: Does it? Where does the time go...

TALLYMAN: Which way are you swinging, if you don't mind my asking?

TASK: Oh, I'm not much of a decision-maker, really. I'll probably just roll some dice.

You?

(TALLYMAN rubs his shoulder.)

TALLYMAN: Well, Tactic makes a strong argument for the Theocracy...but I don't know. The idea of searching for the world above has been in my thoughts for a long time.

TASK: Is that right.

TALLYMAN: Yes. I'm fairly certain that it does exist.

TASK: How's that?

TALLYMAN: Well...can you keep a secret?

TASK: Just the big ones.

TALLYMAN: Have a look at this.

(TALLYMAN pulls out a phone book, its covers torn away.)

TASK: What's this?

TALLYMAN: A book of names. My father saved it from the fires when the blasphemous books were burned.

TASK: A book of names...

(TASK looks through the book. She reads a few names aloud at random. She stops, and turns pages, finding name after name after name. She is astounded.)

TASK: There are thousands of names here...what are these numbers?

TALLYMAN: Date of birth, possibly.

TASK: Wh...where are they? Who are these people?

TALLYMAN: Our ancestors.

TASK: Where did everybody go?

TALLYMAN: Where indeed. Even more fascinating is the section in the back, where a million wonders are illustrated and remarked upon. The pages are yellowed... a very old text.

(TASK flips through to the yellow pages.)

TASK: Airplane...ball-oon...florist...pair-a-lee-gal...pizz-uh...what in Helgatory are these things?

TALLYMAN: Old miracles.

TASK: You should show this to the others.

TALLYMAN: I will be hanged, and the book will be burned.

TASK: Maybe not...Touchstone is dead now...

TALLYMAN: I'll have to wait and see. Please don't tell anyone.

TASK: I won't.

TALLYMAN: Well...I'd best head back, to record the results of the vote. And you've got some laundry to do in the meantime.

TASK: That's right...laundry...

TALLYMAN: Until later.

TASK: Later.

(TALLYMAN exits. TASK drags off the body. Nearing the exit, she mumbles:)

TASK: ...dirty laundry...

(She exits. Percussive noise. Enter TALION, THEOLOGUE and TACTIC.)

THEOLOGUE: ...and the artisan's district?

TACTIC: We've got every vote. But people are getting edgy. They want to know what we're going to do about The Taurine, should we vote to stay.

THEOLOGUE: What?

TALION: Word of Tatterdemalion's sighting has spread like wildfire.

THEOLOGUE: Good grievances.

TACTIC: The people don't feel safe. Not a good way to begin your tenure as monarch.

THEOLOGUE: Has everyone gone mad? Something in the water?

TALION: Just between the three of us...what are we going to do about it?

THEOLOGUE: About what?

TALION: The Taurine.

THEOLOGUE: There's no such thing!

TALION: I'm talking about the idea of The Taurine. The threat of the beast.

THEOLOGUE: Oh. We're going to vote it away. A vote for the Theocracy is a vote for Godna. Godna means peace and security. And if that doesn't do it for them, we'll put monster alarms on the gates, or something.

TALION: Or we could create a new law which outlaws monsters!

THEOLOGUE: Quite. Tribune!

(TRIBUNE materializes.)

THEOLOGUE: The hour is at hand. Collect the votes and have Theory meet me in the inner court.

TRIBUNE: Check.
(TRIBUNE disappears.)

THEOLOGUE: I think, Talion, we'd better pore over the law books to see what sort of punishment is due for the dissenters. I would think their machinations are tantamount to treason, wouldn't you?

TALION: Or public nuisance, at least.

(Exeunt. Percussive noise. TENTATOR and TASK are working on TOUCHSTONE, still under a shroud. Electricians, machine tools. TENTATOR works like a madwoman, her back to the audience. TASK is leery of the whole event.)

TENTATOR: Drillk.
(TASK passes a tool, which gets used.)

TENTATOR: Hammikers.
(TASK passes another tool, which gets used.)

TASK: Can I ask you a question, professor?

TENTATOR: No. Socket squinch.
(A tool is passed and used.)

TASK: Do you believe that we came from a world above?

TENTATOR: I came from the lower east side.

TASK: I mean we as in, our ancestors.

TENTATOR: I believe we evolved from a primordial soup festering in some forgotten black cave.

TASK: You don't think Godna created us?

TENTATOR: I think the primordial soup was leftovers from Godna's lunch.

TASK: There sure are lots of things that we don't know, hey?

TENTATOR: There sure are lots of things that you don't know, my little blind rodent.
Wrenchit.

(A tool is passed and used.)

TASK: Do you think there really is a Taurine?

TENTATOR: Possibly.

TASK: Really?

TENTATOR: Lots of things in this world.

TASK: You think there's some great hairy thing out there right now that wants to eat us?

TENTATOR: There are myriad things out there that would like to eat us. Your next door neighbour, for instance.

TASK: Kettlekit wants to eat me?

TENTATOR: You never know. People are weird.

TASK: That's true. For instance, you're trying to reanimate the dead.

TENTATOR: Case in point.
(TRIBUNE appears.)

TRIBUNE: Tentator and Task. The time has come to cast your vote. You must choose between Theologue and Theory.

TENTATOR: Bah! Why not ask me which bum cheek I prefer? It's all the same crap! Away!
(TRIBUNE disappears.)

TENTATOR: And you can tell our would-be leaders-

TASK: She's gone.

TENTATOR: Nehn. One more little adjustment, and the deliberation becomes pointless. There. There! Now, if my calculations are correct, this should surprise you very much indeed.

(TENTATOR manipulates a remote control, and TOUCHSTONE, now TERMINUS, starts to move beneath the shroud.)

TASK: This is something I didn't need to see today.

(TERMINUS moves in jerky motions, like a marionette rather than a robot. He is like a newborn calf at first,

until TENTATOR gets a hang of the controls.)

TENTATOR: It's alive...alive! More or less...Task, say hello to your once and future king ... Terminus!

TASK: Hello...how are you?

TENTATOR: Say hello, Terminus.

(TERMINUS speaks unintelligibly at first, but becomes more understandable quickly. He speaks in monotones, but not like a robot. More like a very boring person.)

TERMINUS: Lunghh...hulunghh...lown, lohng, helongh. Helongh. Heloww. Hello. Hello.

Hello. Hello. I am Terminus, I am your king.

TASK: How do you do.

TERMINUS: I am do, how do you do.

TASK: Oh, I'm...doing.

TERMINUS: Hello.

TASK: Hello.

(TENTATOR laughs maniacally.)

TENTATOR: (CHEERING) Re-search! Re-search! Re-search!

TASK: Evil, evil, evil!

TENTATOR: Relax, he's harmless. Aren't you, Terminus? You're new and improved, aren't you?

TERMINUS: Hello. I am Terminus. You may bow before me if you want but it is not required. Hello. How do you do.

TASK: He's very personable for an evil thing.

TENTATOR: He's personable and an effective decision-maker. Listen and learn. Terminus my king, we are facing a housing crisis in the west residential district. Whatever shall we do?

TERMINUS: Hello. Let us build new houses on top of the old houses. Do you do you do.

TENTATOR: Fantastic idea, Terminus. Say, listen, some of us have a hankering to go looking for the fantastical world above. But there are others who wish us to remain here, just like always. What say you to that?

TERMINUS: We shall explore the tunnels slowly and methodically over a period of one hundred years. Hello.

TENTATOR: Ta-daa! Everybody's happy. Come on, we've got to make some introductions before they all end up killing each other. Let's go, Terminus.

TERMINUS: How do you do.

(Exeunt. Percussive noise. The inner court. THEOLOGUE, THEORY, TALLYMAN, TALION, TURNKEY and TOURNIQUET are present.)

THEOLOGUE: Tallyman. You have the official results from Tribune?

TALLYMAN: I do.

THEOLOGUE: Will you please announce the official results.

TALLYMAN: Results of the vote open to all T-Class citizens to determine who shall lead in place of the departed Touchstone. Votes cast for Theologue: thirty-seven. Votes cast for Theory: five.

TURNKEY: Aw, we were so close!

THEOLOGUE: Thank you, Tallyman. You may record the result. I would say, better luck next time, Theory, if I thought there would be a next time.

THEORY: Congratulations, Theologue. You've won fair and square.

THEOLOGUE: I have, haven't I.

THEORY: Turnkey, round up the others. We'll leave immediately.

THEOLOGUE: No one is going anywhere.

TOURNIQUET: There are some of us who don't want to be part of your Theocracy. Therefore we are leaving. And we're taking our elixirs and sticking plasters with us.

THEOLOGUE: You too, doctor? I'm disappointed in you.

TOURNIQUET: Oh, don't start. I get enough of that from my father.

THEORY: We're just going to exit quietly out the back door.

THEOLOGUE: Quietly? That's going to be tricky with a hundred laborers at your back. I understand you have the support of Tilthammer.

THEORY: That's right.

THEOLOGUE: Well, I'm afraid that's not going to be enough this time. The ranks of the guard have doubled since the labour crisis, and there are platoons placed at every outer gate. Tactic is with us.

THEORY: Yes, well, what is dogma without the muscle to back it up?

THEOLOGUE: We can't let you leave, Theory. You must realize that. The absence of a hundred people can't go unnoticed. A few more will be encouraged to make the trek, and a few more, and ten more, and a hundred more, until finally there's nothing left but a few cows and some rats.

THEORY: I can think of no one who is more suited to being Queen of the Rats than you.

THEOLOGUE: Ouch.

(Enter TENTATOR and TASK.)

TENTATOR: Everyone can relax, I've found a common solution to all our problems.

TALION: Tentator. Taking an interest in the local politics, how extraordinary.

THEOLOGUE: Tribune tells me you declined to vote on the issue.

TENTATOR: Yes, I was too busy working on the solution.

TALION: The solution?

TASK: Oh, you're going love this...hold on to your lunch, though...

TENTATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce your recently refurbished and better than ever king Terminus!

(TENTATOR works her remote and TERMINUS ambles in.)

TERMINUS: Hello. How do you do.

THEOLOGUE: Vishny, mother of Godna, what have you done?

TENTATOR: Relax, he's docile as a lamb. But he'll make all those tough decisions for you. Watch. Terminus my king, poisonous runoff from the factories is contaminating the ground streams. What shall we do?

TERMINUS: Hello. We shall burn down the factories.

TENTATOR: Whoops, just let me make a little adjustment here...

TALION: As if mythical monsters weren't enough, now we have the walking dead.

TENTATOR: Please, bear with me a moment. He's the perfect king-firm but fair, indefatigable, incorruptible and he comes with a ten year quality assurance guarantee.

TERMINUS: And I am great with children. More taxes!

TENTATOR: No, no-

THEORY: That clinches it. We're leaving.

TALION: Theory, you and all of your supporters are guilty of conspiracy to dissent, which is punishable in full court and carries with it the possibility of a death sentence.

THEORY: Oh, well, since you put it that way, I guess we'll stay then.

(Snorts and snickers from THEORY's group.)

TALION: You didn't let me finish.

(TALION pulls THEORY aside.)

TALION: Now, we could lessen the punishment, with your cooperation. Godna knows I don't want to see something like that happen to you, and Tourniquet, and Turnkey. I like you. In fact, we could forget the whole thing.

THEORY: Great.

TALION: On one condition.

THEORY: And what's that?

TALION: You make a public speech renouncing your ideas about the world above, and you stay put.

THEORY: That's two conditions.

TALION: No, no, it was all one sentence.

THEORY: One sentence containing two conditions.
TALION: Okay then, two conditions. Will you consider it?
THEORY: One condition, one hundred conditions, it's all the same. We're not staying.
TALION: You're signing your own death warrant.
THEORY: To stay would mean the death of my soul. (TO THE OTHERS) Let's go.
THEOLOGUE: I'm warning you, Theory!
THEORY: Shut up...
(Exit THEORY, TURNKEY, TOURNIQUET.)
THEOLOGUE: (SHOUTING) This is your last warning! (TO TALION) After them!
TALION: Me?
THEOLOGUE: Yes! You!
TALION: But...they'll punch me!
THEOLOGUE: Tribune!
(TRIBUNE appears.)
THEOLOGUE: Theory's entourage is headed for Horsetown to round up the labourers. Cut them off and give them an ultimatum. Surrender or perish at the hands of the guard.
TRIBUNE: Check.
(TRIBUNE disappears.)
TENTATOR: Okay. I think that should do it. Terminus, take some decisive action upon the current issue.
(TERMINUS walks to THEOLOGUE and does a monotonous little dance. This goes on for a little bit, until:
)
THEOLOGUE: Get this horrible thing out of my face.
TENTATOR: Give him a minute, I think he's working up to something-
TASK: He might start juggling...
THEOLOGUE: I order you to destroy this unnatural thing immediately.
TENTATOR: But...he's a living person...that would be murder...
THEOLOGUE: Talion, work up a new law about reanimating the dead. And make it harsh!
TALION: Godna's will be done.
(TALION and THEOLOGUE exit.)
TENTATOR: I cannot tell you how frustrating it is being a martyr for science.
TERMINUS: Hello! Do you how do you?
TASK: It really is a horrible thing, Tentator.
TENTATOR: What? Horrible? Unnecessary, perhaps. Amusing, maybe. But horrible? Did you see his little dance that he did there? Adorable!
TASK: I say we bury it and forget the whole thing.
TENTATOR: You would, wouldn't you, you little creature. No, no, no. Too much of my afternoon has gone into creating this thing. If we badger them enough, they can't help but see things our way. Let's go.
TASK: I'm hot on your heels, professor.

(TENTATOR and TERMINUS exit.)
TALLYMAN: The times are changing, Task. Tentator's heart is in the right place, but things are too far gone to set right, now.
TASK: You know what I'd like right now? I'd like a nice, fat, jicy ballhead mushroom fried up with butter and whisper root. Mmmm-mmm.
TALLYMAN: I'm going to go with Theory. I have to know. What are you going to do?
TASK: Oh, I think I'm just going to sit here and rue the day.
TALLYMAN: Farewell, Task.
TASK: Safe journey, Tallyman.
(TALLYMAN exits. TASK sets down her box and rucksack, and sits.)
TASK:

(SINGING QUIETLY)

There was a boy in West End Town
Who thought he saw a ghost
He ran into his mother's arms
And trembled like a root
The neighbours searched and kicked about
But nothing was unearthed
The boy who saw the ghost had seen it
Every day since birth.

(Lights flicker and go out.)

TASK: Aw, roots.

(TASK produces a flashlight and switches it on. She waves it about. The beam lands on the face of THE TAURINE, who roars. TASK screams. Percussion, howls, screams offstage. Lights up. Enter TALION, THEOLOGUE, TACTIC.)

THEOLOGUE: Well, seems everything is coming together very badly.

TALION: The citizens are frightened and confused.

TACTIC: That's pretty much standard behavior, isn't it?

TALION: Some of them may decide to bolt. News of the laborers' gathering have got people talking.

THEOLOGUE: These next few hours could make or break us.

(THEOLOGUE trips on TASK's belongings.)

THEOLOGUE: What is this and why is it laying here.

TALION: Those are Task's various burdens.

THEOLOGUE: Where is Task?

(TRIBUNE appears in a flash.)

THEOLOGUE: You have delivered my ultimatum?

TRIBUNE: Theory says for you to shut up.

THEOLOGUE: Fine. Tactic, assemble your men. They'll be heading for the closest gate. We'll intercept them in East Town. Tribune, we are now in a state of martial law. Let the citizens know.

TRIBUNE: Check.

(TRIBUNE trips over TASK's gear and falls to the ground. She gets up quickly. TACTIC gathers up TASK's gear.)

TRIBUNE: Hm. Never done that before...

TACTIC: Bad omen...

THEOLOGUE: Shut it! Let's move, time is fleeting.

(All exit. Percussive noise. Enter THEORY, TURNKEY, TOURNIQUET and TILTHAMMER.)

THEORY: It's quiet...

TOURNIQUET: A little too quiet...I smell a trap...

TILTHAMMER: That could be me you're smellin'...ain't had time for the washin' lately...

TOURNIQUET: How many times have I stressed to you the importance of regular monthly bathing?

TURNKEY: I thought it was bi-monthly...

THEORY: Okay, settle down here-

(Enter TACTIC and five black masks.)

TACTIC: Well, well, well. What have we here? Deserters?

THEORY: Step aside, Tactic. I have no desire to see any violence here today.

TACTIC: I'm afraid you've left us no alternative, Theory. Theologue has decreed a state of martial law. Which means I am authorized to use as much force as necessary to keep the peace.

TOURNIQUET: How exactly does one use force to keep the peace?

TACTIC: Stuff some gauze in that talk-box, doctor. I'm not here to discuss linguistics.
TOURNIQUET: Oh, you're going to get such a leeching...
TACTIC: Guards! Arrest them.
TILTHAMMER: Now, I don't think anybody's goin' ta be arrestin' anybody here today, Tactic.
TACTIC: Says who, labourer?
TILTHAMMER: Well, me and my hammer, I s'pose.
TACTIC: I'm not the least bit afraid of you, Tilthammer.
TILTHAMMER: This should make for an interestin' scuffle then...
(TILTHAMMER brandishes his hammer, and TACTIC produces a weapon of his own. They circle each other menacingly. Then TILTHAMMER hefts his hammer and shouts a war cry. TACTIC and the BLACK MASKS run screaming, pursued by THEORY et al. Percussive noise, shouts of conflict. Enter THEOLOGUE, TENTATOR and TERMINUS.)
THEOLOGUE: How many times must I tell you, get that thing away from me!
TERMINUS: Hello! The third day of every cycle shall be a holiday honouring cheese!
TENTATOR: I realize that there are a couple of wrinkles need ironing out-
(Enter TRIBUNE)
TRIBUNE: Theory has broken through. They're heading for the black tunnels.
THEOLOGUE: And what of Tactic? He'd better be dead...
TRIBUNE: He was in pursuit.
THEOLOGUE: Well, that's just what we need. The whole of the guard, lost in the black tunnels. And with our community in such a state of upheaval.
(Enter TALION.)
TALION: It's worse than you think. The situation is just shy of chaos. Great numbers are unaccounted for, and the rest are in a fever. There is talk that The Taurine moves among us.
THEOLOGUE: Have you seen it?
TALION: Ehrm...no...
THEOLOGUE: I am not interested in your tales of mass hallucinations..
TRIBUNE: I've seen it.
THEOLOGUE: What?
TRIBUNE: The beast.
THEOLOGUE: Have you, now.
TRIBUNE: Moving amongst the throngs of a mass exodus from West Town to East Town.
A great horned beast, goring and stamping its way through the crowd.
THEOLOGUE: You saw a cow.

TRIBUNE: I know a cow from a monster.
THEOLOGUE: You wouldn't know a cow from your mother.
TRIBUNE: Well, now, that's just insulting.
THEOLOGUE: Am I all alone here? Must I squeeze order out of this situation with my bare hands? You are my inner court, you have a responsibility to the people to help maintain the peace.
TENTATOR: The citizens need a little comfort food. It would help them to know that their king is alive and well...
TALION: What are you suggesting?
(TENTATOR works the kingly remote. TERMINUS waves.)
TERMINUS: Hello!
(A pause as the group considers the options.)
THEOLOGUE: Alright. Let there be a public appearance. But keep it short. And Godna help us.
TERMINUS: Do you do do?
(TERMINUS and TENTATOR depart.)
TRIBUNE: With all due respect, that thing is going to spook the masses even further.

THEOLOGUE: You're awfully chatty this evening.
TRIBUNE: I'm on my break.
THEOLOGUE: Well, break's over. Find Tactic and send him back here on the double.
TRIBUNE: Check.
(TRIBUNE disappears.)
THEOLOGUE: And if you see Theory, let her know-
TALION: She's gone.
THEOLOGUE: Nehn. Come. We must go and lend support to the king-thing.
TALION: I suspect some interpretation may be required.
THEOLOGUE: Quite.

(Exit TALION and THEOLOGUE. Percussive noise, off. Lights very dim. Enter THEORY and TURNKEY with flashlights. They are examining a map.)

TURNKEY: We're almost at the edge of the map, here.
THEORY: If we can get across this bridge, here, we can reach that final gate. Do you have a key for that gate?
TURNKEY: I don't know. Probably. Got a lot of keys, here...but that bridge is out. There's no way over that chasm unless we double back around to the six-way junction.
THEORY: And run smack dab into Tactic and his goons. Maybe we can repair this bridge somehow.
(CALLING) Tilthammer! (TO TURNKEY) How long will it take Tactic to find a way around the gate we jammed up here?
TURNKEY: If he has a map, then no time at all. They'll just as easily break it down, anyway.
THEORY: We haven't much time.
(TILTHAMMER appears.)
THEORY: Tilthammer, how long do you think it would take you and your men to get that bridge in safe working order?
TILTHAMMER: Aye, t'is nearly done.
THEORY: You've already started fixing it?
TILTHAMMER: Aye, well, y'all were just sort of standin' around lookin' at things. I thought the time were just as well spent bein' productive.
THEORY: Good thinking.

TILTHAMMER: T'weren't thinkin', t'were doin'.
(TILTHAMMER exits.)

THEORY: Better see if Tallyman has any more maps. This one's about to become redundant.
TURNKEY: Can do.
(TURNKEY exits.)

THEORY: Godna...I think it's pretty clear how we feel about one another...but if you're out there somewhere, well, we sure could use your help right about now.

(In the distance, a howl from The TAURINE. A pause. The sound of many people hammering. THEORY exits. Lights dim a little more. Enter TALLYMAN and TURNKEY, with map and flashlights.)

TURNKEY: I'm telling you, we're going around in circles.
TALLYMAN: You've got the map upside down.
TURNKEY: How do you know?
TALLYMAN: There are more thumbprints on this edge.
TURNKEY: Maybe that just means that more people were holding it the wrong way. Which would explain why we're going around in circles.
TALLYMAN: I don't think we are...
(Enter TERMINUS.)
TERMINUS: Hello! How do you do?

(TURNKEY and TALLYMAN stare at him blankly. Then TENTATOR stumbles in, and falls. TURNKEY and TALLYMAN rush to her side.)

TALLYMAN: Tentator!

TENTATOR: I saw it...I saw it...

TURNKEY: Have we marched all the way back to the city?

TENTATOR: I saw it...

TALLYMAN: (CALLING OUT) Doctor!

TENTATOR: I saw it...I saw it...

TERMINUS: How do you do you do? Hello!

(Enter TOURNIQUET, who sees TENTATOR and rushes to aid.)

TOURNIQUET: Alright, stand back. Stand back!

TALLYMAN: She's delirious.

TURNKEY: Should I find some leeches?

TOURNIQUET: Are you insane? This woman needs a sandwich-do you hear me? A sandwich! Something meaty!

(TURNKEY exits.)

TOURNIQUET: Tentator, can you hear me?

TERMINUS: Hello!

TALLYMAN: Shut up!

TOURNIQUET: It's Tourniquet. Can you hear me?

TENTATOR: Thank Godna...I've found you...

TOURNIQUET: Yes, here I am.

TENTATOR: I thought...I was dead...

(THEORY enters.)

THEORY: Tentator! How is she, doctor?

TOURNIQUET: Malnourished, and frightened. And she smells a little. But I think she's going to be alright.

TENTATOR: I saw it...flashing eyes...felt its breath upon my neck...

THEORY: The Taurine.

TENTATOR: Yes...

THEORY: How did you find us?

TENTATOR: Fled the city...wandered for days...running from the beast...

THEORY: You fled the city? What happened?

TENTATOR: Chaos...the citizens...raised arms against us...Theologue and Talion were swept away by the crowd...Tactic and the guard dispersed, drowned in a sea of chaos...

I fled...with Terminus...

TERMINUS: Hello!

(THE TAURINE howls, very close.)

TOURNIQUET: I'm experiencing a wetness in my trouser area...

THEORY: It's close. We'd better move. Let's collect the others...

(All exit. Percussive noise. Lights dim further. Enter THEORY, TOURNIQUET, TERMINUS, TENTATOR, TILTHAMMER, and three WHITE MASKS.)

TENTATOR: This is hopeless. We're hopelessly lost.

TOURNIQUET: We're not lost, we just don't know...quite...where we are.

TENTATOR: We've been wandering around for days.

TILTHAMMER: And the beast dogs our every step.

TENTATOR: What can we do?

THEORY: We can keep moving. This way.

(All make for an exit. THE TAURINE howls.)

THEORY: Okay, this way...

(All exit opposite. Lights dim further. Enter all, plus TURNKEY, plus another WHITE MASK. They walk across the stage and exit. Lights dim further. All walk across the stage again. They grow weary.)

TERMINUS: Hello!

THEORY, TOURNIQUET and TURNKEY: (NON-SYNCHRONOUS) Shut up.

(All exit. The TAURINE howls. Stage is in total blackness. Enter all save TURNKEY. They walk to center and stop, flashing their lights all around.)

TILTHAMMER: We've already been here.

TOURNIQUET: This is hopeless! That thing has got us winding around in circles!

TENTATOR: We'll have to try and find our way back...

TOURNIQUET: What do you think, Theory?

TENTATOR: This isn't getting us anywhere.

TILTHAMMER: Never find our way back at this point.

TOURNIQUET: Theory, we've got to do something. We've lost forty people.

TERMINUS: How do you do?

TENTATOR: Theory.

THEORY: Everybody, just shut up, I need to think!

(A howl, close.)

TILTHAMMER: Time for thinkin's done. Now's time for doin'.

THEORY: What do you want to do, Tilthammer.

TILTHAMMER: Take the party and head down that parallel tunnel. Go 'round it.

THEORY: It'll intercept us at the junction.

TILTHAMMER: T'won't be interceptin' nothing afore goin' through me first.

THEORY: No.

TILTHAMMER: That's t'way t'is. Go on now. Afore it's on our laps.

THEORY: We'll stay together.

TILTHAMMER: I'll not see another horse lost to the thing. Go on. Now.

THEORY: You're sure about this?

TILTHAMMER: Aye. Me and my hammer'll get the job done.

THEORY: I can't let you do this, Tilthammer.

TILTHAMMER: T'would take a greater thing than you to stop me, Theory. My mind's made up.

(A pause.)

TILTHAMMER: Go on.

THEORY: We'll leave a trail behind us. You find us.

TILTHAMMER: Aye.

(A pause.)

THEORY: Okay, let's move. Quickly, now.

(All exit save THEORY and TILTHAMMER. The TAURINE howls.

THEORY lingers a moment, then exits. TILTHAMMER is alone.)

TILTHAMMER: Aye. We'll get the job done. We'll get the job done...we'll get it done...

(A sound. TILTHAMMER trains his light and finds the TAURINE. The beast roars. TILTHAMMER hefts his hammer...percussive noise. Black out. THEORY, TOURNIQUET and TENTATOR enter in blackness. Silence. Then:)

TENTATOR: If he hasn't caught up with us yet, he never will.

TOURNIQUET: He'd be no better off than where he is now.

TENTATOR: Where are we?

TOURNIQUET: We're in Helgatory. The deepest, blackest pit of Helgatory.

(A pause.)

THEORY: No. We're here.

(THEORY turns on her light and there stands THE TAURINE. No sound. No movement from anyone. A low growl from the TAURINE.)

THEORY: No. That's enough. There's no where left for us to run. I know who you are.

(THEORY is slowly approaching the beast.)

THEORY: I know what you are. We have felt your breath. Heard your footsteps. We have shivered and cried and screamed for you. Well, there's nothing left. No fear left for you to eat. This is the end of this. I know what you are. I know what you are. Now you show us the way home.

(THEORY is nose to nose with the beast. She shivers slightly. The TAURINE snorts down at her. She does not move. He steps back a pace. Slowly, he lifts his hand and waves in a direction downstage. Lights rise, very faint at first. THEORY moves toward it. We can see more figures in the exit way. TOURNIQUET and TENTATOR follow THEORY, slowly. The TAURINE disappears. More figures enter, singly and in pairs, as the lights continue to rise, TALLYMAN, TERMINUS, four WHITE MASKS, and TURNKEY. They cluster together at centre stage, looking up at the ever-growing light, which intensifies to the point where it is difficult for the people to look at. We hear birdsong, which increases in volume and density. All stand amazed. THEORY removes her mask, followed by one or two others. Blackout. CURTAIN.)

Supine

By Hannah Feiner

June 2001

SHARON: Supine
SAM: Here are we, the sisters three.
SHARON: Supine.
KAITLYN: Will you two please be quiet - I'm trying to remember.
SAM: To my right, you'll see the brilliant Kaitlyn.
KAITLYN: We were...we were...I've got it! We were at the cottage...
SAM: and to my left, the lovely Sharon.
SHARON: We'll begin here. We all do, don't we? Tangled up in a) limbs
KAITLYN: b) words
SAM: or c) other such devices of the soul.
KAITLYN: You remember the cottage right, guys...at Wolff lake...we slept in that loft.
SAM: and who am I, you ask?
SHARON: We'll lay here always, we say
KAITLYN: It must have been the cottage...
SHARON: Of course, this is distant from the truth
SAM: Me? I'm Samantha...but most people call me Sam.
KAITLYN: Can you believe I did that?
SAM: What?
SHARON: Infinity has strange manifestations.
KAITLYN: I built a raft.
SAM: Oh yeah Kaitlyn, I remember that morning.
SHARON: We will begin.
KAITLYN: I built a raft once. (pause - all attention on KAITLYN) I built a raft once. (pause) It's morning at my cottage. I am the only one awake in a bedroom for three girls.
SHARON and SAM: Where are you going, Kaitlyn?
KAITLYN: It's very early. I leave my cottage and go to the beach. This is not allowed but I'm the oldest and I'm sick of being treated like a baby.
SHARON and SAM: What are you looking for, Kaitlyn?
KAITLYN: The beach...the water! Its so big and so clear and I want to lie down on it, if only I could figure out... (pause) I built a raft once.
SHARON and SAM: How? How Kaitlyn?
KAITLYN: In the boathouse there are two inner tubes. I can tie them together with Samantha's bathing suit. Then some wood, a towel and a lifejacket for my pillow. Perfect. In the water. I use all of my strength. Push Kaitlyn, push! Paddle! Paddle...faster...opps I'm tipping I'm...phew. Paddle Kaitlyn, paddle...then finally...at last. (pause) I built a raft. (pause) Peace. The current is so gentle and I'm not fighting with my sisters. The sun's so bright, Mom would be mad at me for not wearing sunscreen. Ha! (pause) I'm all alone - just me and the lake. I don't need them.
SHARON and SAM: What are you looking for Kaitlyn?
KAITLYN: They found me. Dad went looking in his motorboat and he brought me back. He yelled and mom cried. I was grounded. Samantha and Sharon were jealous that I got all the attention.
SHARON and SAM: What were you looking for, Kaitlyn?
KAITLYN: I built a raft once. I have absoluty no idea where it is now.
SAM: I've always been the rebel. Its funny to think about, because I never tried to be bad. Its just who I am, I guess. I'm bad. (pause) When I was a teenager, my parents used to get mad at me for partying. My sisters would talk about me when they though I wasn't listening.
SHARON: Sam drinks

KAITLYN: Sam does marijuana.

SHARON: Do you know that some mornings Sam forgets what she did the night before?

SAM: Not true. As usual, Sharon didn't know what she was talking about. I never forgot. Just because you're loaded doesn't mean (pause), it doesn't mean anything. What I do remember (pause) is passing out. (pause) Peace - let me tell you. The first time I was 14. A frat party. I tried to out drink some chick and I ended up on the floor - under a pool table. (pause) The first thing that amazed me was that no one cared. "Look at the girl." "What a maggot." "Hey Sam, you still alive?" (pause) I was alive. The carpet felt so soft then, so cozy. Voices floated over me and the carpet was so soft and I was part of the carpet. I was safe. (pause) My mother used to tell her friends "I'm worried about Sam. That girl has a nasty streak." (pause) I'll tell you something, I enjoyed it. That helpless look on her face when she'd find bottles in my closet. (pause) I thought about my mother when I was laying under that pool table. (pause) I thought about my friends, still up, still drinking. (pause) I thought so hard that after awhile, I couldn't hear anybody anymore. It was just me and my carpet - a hole, really. A water bed that you just sink into. (pause) I rocked myself to sleep that night. Away from my family, in a frat house, under a pool table, laying on a carpet. I rocked myself to sleep.

SHARON: My first time.

KAITLYN: Sharon! You didn't!

SAM: Oh my god, my little sister.

SHARON: My first time. (pause) I was sixteen, on Jeremy Sutton's basement couch. It was damp. I was sober. I don't know what time it was; it was dark outside and there was a Jeopardy! rerun on TV. (pause) Jeremy was on a mission. He kissed me and began to undo my Levi's at the same time. I was impressed - excited even. But then, "Uh, Sharon? Can you, uh, help me out down here." (pause) I don't remember much about it - he was fast. What I remember is - I don't know why - but I remember keeping my socks on. White sports socks, from Zellars. It was just me - naked - and then those socks: like some sort of protection. (pause) It hurt. (pause) Jeremy Sutton kept his eyes closed the whole time. Squeezed shut. When I figured out he wasn't looking at me I watched him. Breathing through his nose and clenching his jaw in concentration. (pause) When it was over, he lay on top of me, panting. I wanted to tell him that he hurt me (pause) but I...I couldn't find the words. So I just lay there, under him, wriggling my toes around in my socks.

SAM: Supine.

KAITLYN: I'll rest here.

SAM: While noises and voices scatter gleefully above my head.

KAITLYN: My intentions are sketchy at best.

SHARON: This isn't resting, really.

KAITLYN: What would you call it?

SHARON: I don't know.

SAM: Thinking.

SHARON: That's better. (pause) We'll think here.

SAM: There was a time when I didn't go by Samantha.

SHARON: Hey Kaitlyn, did mom tell you? Sam dropped out of college.

KAITLYN: Are you serious? What's she doing?

SAM: I wasn't "Sam", either, except to my family, who I didn't really see much of, then. SHARON: I don't know. Travelling or something.

KAITLYN: Who does she think she is?

SAM: (pause) Who was I? You know music, like "rock and roll"...yeah. Meet the chick bassist. (pause) I had everything, believe me. Cramped van...no air conditioning...three male musicians. If you could call them that. (pause) In the name of "rock and roll", our noses bled and we endured requisite patterns on our arms. We had involuntary hunger strikes and beer fueled 48 hour drives. (pause) Sorry, I'll stop talking about that time. That time when I couldn't bear to look in the mirror for weeks and got more diseases than you'd find in a medical text. (pause) You heard me - the chick bassist. Sometimes we needed money or a place to stay or sometimes one of my band mates would just feel like climbing on top of me. "You are the

chick bassist," I used to tell myself, every time. I guess I thought I was free. (pause) But I'll stop talking about that time (pause) I quit, you know. My last show was supposed to be in Seattle. Three male musicians left me alone to set up while they went to score. Same as usual. "We'll be back soon, don't break a fingernail." (pause) I found a trap door. It lead under the stage so I went, too. (pause) I guess I didn't realize how tired I was. I didn't plan to stay long, but it was so nice -laying down in my own little cave. Quiet, too. I thought it was, anyway, until the music started. (pause) They played without me. Their music, not mine anymore, theirs; it hurt my ears. It closed me in (pause) and hurt my head (pause) and hurt my body and I listened until I couldn't hear anymore. I listened like that, not listening, until it was over and I was alone, finally. Away from my family, in Seattle, in a bar, under the stage my band had just left. (pause) Laying down. (pause) Finally alone.

SHARON: I've never minded cleaning. At home, growing up, my sisters would pay me to do their chores.

KAITLYN: Hey Sharon, I'll give you a dollar if you do the dishes for me.

SAM: Lick the plates and I'll make it two. (They laugh).

SHARON: Behind my parents' backs, of course. (pause) You could even say that I like to clean. (pause) My roommates know that. They left this morning to go to the beach with the kitchen floor filthy. "You'll have more fun here, won't you Sharon." (pause) Well, I don't mind cleaning. That's why I'm here. Soaking up chemical cleansers instead of sun. Wiping up various cat hairs, spilled beverages, dirty shoe marks and a thousand other unidentifiable compounds. (pause) That's why I'm here. Back and forth and back and forth and back and forth and back and forth until my arm is tired and my mind is (pause) numb. (pause) side to side and side to side and side to side and side (pause)...it will look good. When I'm done. So shiny and so smooth that you could skate on it. So incredibly clean that you could run your tongue up and down every floor tile. Our kitchen floor. (pause) So why am I stopping? Not because I don't like clean kitchen floors. Not because my roommates don't give a shit. Not because I've got anything better to do...so why am I stopping? Why? Because I'm tired.

KAITLYN: The Holiday Inn is the perfect place for me tonight. My room is small and clean and has a double bed that I can lay down the center of. Which is what I want to do, alone, tonight. And think. (pause) Think about saying yes to the ring Ben gave me tonight at dinner. Yes, that's right - ring. Kaitlyn Montgomery, law student and sister of two was propositioned. And my answer? (pause) To tell you honestly, I think its a matter of independence, or lack thereof. Can you imagine me, a "Mrs."? (pause). In room 213 at the Holiday Inn is a mini-fridge. Isolated. Clean. From it I will drink one small Evian. Then I will put the bottle in the wire mesh wastepaper basket. So easy. So clean. (pause) I want to tell Ben something. (pause) I want to tell him what I read in Cosmo of all places - I (pause) I read that your weakest finger is the one next to your pinkie. (pause) It's funny, I'm not even tired now. (pause) Now that I've decided. (pause) I couldn't even call it a decision, really. I guess I...I always knew. (pause) I'm choosing this room. I'm choosing this double bed made for one. I...I'm choosing. (pause) Like I said, the Holiday Inn is perfect tonight.

SHARON: Supine.

SAM: I'll end here, I suppose.

SHARON: Unless I choose the other way - scattered into flight like a rain shower fallen.

KAITLYN: No thank you. This seems less appalling to contend with - an eternity of uninterrupted-by-snooze-button slumber.

SAM: It's a shame, really, when you think about it.

KAITLYN: It is?

SHARON: Consider it, Kaitlyn.

SAM: We could have gone this way from the beginning.

KAITLYN: We'll end here.

SHARON: I believe in ghosts, you know. For a while tonight I was trying to get to sleep, but then I realized that I'm not tired. So I'm just laying here, thinking about ghosts. (pause) Actually, I wasn't supposed to be in bed tonight at all. I was supposed to be at my friend's wedding. Six o'clock, St. Peter's Presbyterian Church. Sean, my boyfriend, was supposed to pick me up at five fifteen. Well, he tried to, but I didn't come

to the door. I wasn't ready. I was in my pajama's, actually, lying right here. He knocked for a while, but he left, eventually. He may have tried calling, but, to be honest, I'm not sure. I disconnected the phone. (pause) So I'm here. Not because I don't like weddings, but because sometimes I need to think about them - the ghosts. (pause) Like me - I mean - when I'm a ghost. I will be, I think. I have this feeling. I think when I'm a ghost I'll see myself again - living - and I'm worried, see, 'cause I'll see myself always fallen, always down and (pause) its hard to explain but I'll need to see myself like this. (pause) Just laying here, like this. Alone...thinking.

KAITLYN: I've always liked trains. Its just tonight for some reason (pause) I don't. (pause) Tonight I'm on a sleeper from Vancouver to Toronto: I'm going to visit my parents. Tonight I'm restless - I'm having trouble sleeping because I can't stop thinking. (pause) I'm thinking about crashing. (pause) Not the actual physical act, but the theoretical implications. See, I'm so free right now, alone on this train, traveling through our country. Too free. (pause) Before I never thought there was such a thing as too free. Until tonight. Tonight I'm alone and (pause) scared. I (pause) I wish someone was laying with me on this cramped mattress. Because I'm scared. Not because I know that this train's going to crash, but because (pause) if it did, who would miss me? To tell you the truth, I wish I was ready to crash, right now, like I was ready to drown on my raft all those years ago. I wish I could say that it'd be okay if this train crashed (pause) now. But it wouldn't be - it wouldn't be okay because I (pause) I need someone here.

SAM: I dug myself a grave last night.

KAITLYN/SHARON: Why, Sam?

SAM: Why, pray tell? (pause) Because I need to be bad again. Because I'm sick of working nine to five at the health food store. Because (pause) because I'm fed up with trying to write my own songs because they don't (pause) because nothing works.

KAITLYN/SHARON: What are you looking for, Sam?

SAM: I'm sure you're laughing at me. Former teen rebel is now victim of teen angst. Whatever. (pause) So last night I drove to Wolff lake, to my parents' old cottage. (pause) In the sand, on the beach where my sisters and I used to play I dug (pause) my grave.

KAITLYN/SHARON: Where are you going, Sam?

SAM: (pause) It took awhile. (pause) I used an old Tonka shovel that I found in the boathouse. (pause) Okay, to be honest, I didn't finish. I wasn't so much that I got tired, it was more (pause) I realized that I didn't know what the hell I was doing.

KAITLYN/SHARON: What are you looking for, Sam?

SAM: So actually, I dug myself a deficient grave last night. When I finished, I stuck my shovel in the sand and lay down. (pause) Have you ever done that? I mean, have you ever just about experienced a future that you thought you wanted right away but really you don't? Really you're terrified and for the first time ever you don't want to go down, go under, go beneath. Be bad.

KAITLYN/SHARON: Who are you, Sam?

SAM: I dug myself a tunnel last night. And though it I crawled - up, up, up. (pause) That's right - I went up.

KAITLYN: We'll end here.

SHARON: I don't think so, Kaitlyn.

SAM: We'll begin here.

KAITLYN: Why not?

SAM: Tangled up in a) limbs, b) words or c) other such devices of the soul.

SHARON: Come on Kaitlyn Montgomery, you're not telling me that you're tired.

KAITLYN: No! Why would I be?

SAM: We'll begin.

Theseus In The Labyrinth

A Tragic Farce by J. G. De Souza

[Bare stage. Enter THESEUS wearing a top hat, trenchcoat, a three piece suit, glasses and dress shoes. He carries a suitcase and an umbrella. Moderato.]

THESEUS: Day one. All right. Here I am. This isn't so bad. I thought the overwhelming stench of death and hopelessness would be far more pungent. Not bad. I can certainly handle that. All right. Good. I had quite a nice voyage over here. My cabin was small but clean and nicely furnished. Princes normally are given first class treatment. I, of course, had insisted that such pampering was not necessary and instructed them to treat me as any other human sacrifice heading for Crete. I had actually been looking forward to bunking with the other human sacrifices and getting to know them a little bit. Unfortunately, none of them seemed particularly interested in gaining my acquaintance. They responded to me politely but briefly when I spoke to them at meals and such. I suppose that my semiformal attire may have been a tad foreign to them. Of course they could have been untalkative for other reasons. Many of them had already been shackled by Cretan sailors and had had the specific cuts of meat into which they could be divided labeled with a magic marker for the beast's convenience. However, though they wouldn't converse at length with me, I do feel that I came to know them intimately, sharing their plight, being lost in the same deathtrap. I feel that we are friends. Bosom buddies so to speak. Compadres, as the Spanish might say. In particular I found myself attached to two of my fellow human sacrifices. The first was a short, slightly unkempt, yet intelligent-looking young man. This young man, whose name, I believe, is Bobby, seemed quite relaxed about his imminent doom. At mealtimes, when many of his peers were filling their pockets with dinner rolls and small packets of ketchup, anticipating future hunger, Bobby could be seen nonchalantly playing with his soup. I found this particularly fascinating. As he stirred it with his dessert spoon, describing multifarious patterns with his utensil, he did not have any air of melancholy. I inquired about his behaviour and he responded casually that he did not feel that the soup was of high quality and didn't have any particular appetite in any case. I thought this was remarkable. When I return home in victorious triumph, I plan to carry out a sociological study on the behaviour of the average working class male when confronted with substandard soup. I know not what the results will be but I am sure that they will be a significant contribution to the field of soup response research. The other fellow human sacrifice was a young lady who is far too beautiful to be of common birth. I did not catch her name, nor did we actually speak to one another at any time during the trip, however, I observed her quite closely and have reason to believe that she loves me with all her heart or at least would love me with all her heart if I ever had the good fortune of speaking with her. She shall be the vision from which I shall derive strength throughout my quest. Numerous experts on quests suggest that having a beautiful and well-born female on whom one may concentrate is quite beneficial for a self-appointed hero like myself. I will recall the image of her luminous beauty, looking at someone in the room who is not me, whenever I require moral strength. But enough idle chitchat. Now, a systematic approach will make this much simpler. At every possible turn, I shall take the right. If there more than one turn right I shall take the one furthest to the right. Good. All right. Once I have exhausted all the possibilities that that presents me, I shall retrace my steps and try every other possible turn, moving from right to left. In this way, it is statistically impossible for me to not find the Minotaur sooner or later. Once I have discovered either the Minotaur or the Minotaur's lair, I will be able to deploy the conveniently portable Minotaur killing device that I have brought with me for this express purpose. I shall be careful not to overexert myself, walking instead of running and pausing for fifteen minute breaks every three hours. My lunch break shall be for a full half hour and I will scrupulously go to bed a ten o'clock sharp each evening, sleeping for eight hours and rising at six. On weekends, I shall allow myself to sleep for an extra twenty-seven minutes and will take eighteen minute breaks from walking. On bank holidays, I will take a forty eight and a half minute lunch break. All right. Good. Very good. Now, if a problem does arise, I can always follow my way back to this entrance with the significant length of string that I have brought with my in my suitcase of dehydrated food. All right. Here I am. Here I go. Into the labyrinth!

[Black-out. Lights up. THESEUS is wearing a top hat, a three piece suit, glasses and dress shoes. He carries a ball of string, a suitcase and an umbrella. Andantino.]

THESEUS: Day three. Things have been progressing all right. I have been taking nothing but right turns since I've gotten here. The only way to manage any large task like navigating in the labyrinth is to treat it scientifically. One left turn would mess up the whole process. In any case, I can always follow the string back to my suitcase at the entrance, if a problem arises. I must be willing to wait this out. It is, of course, rather dark in here but my eyes are adjusting. Of course, it's the sounds that... [Pause.] It's the sounds... [Pause.] It's the... [Pause.] Excuse me. Hallo? Hallo? [Pause.] It's the... [Pause.] Hallo? Is there somebody there? It's the the sounds that one hears that are most disturbing. Often it's the howling of one's fellow human sacrifices; of one's friends. Sometimes they sound very far away and sometimes they sound very close. Sometimes they say words and sometimes they sound like animals crying out in a nonverbal sense. The other noises are unnerving too. Sometimes... [Pause.] Sometimes it sounds as if one is creeping up on one. One can hear footsteps or breathing a crack. It could be a lot of things really. Of course, one always assumes the worst. One always assumes that it's the beast. The Minotaur. Of course, it's not. One can't see either way and one has the instinct to run which is a silly instinct because one could easily run into a wall or trip. They say the Minotaur doesn't need to see you. He gets around by smell the smell of blood or some such thing. I don't suppose that's as effective as, say echo-location but it's probably an evolutionary advantage of some sort. In any case, the sounds are most disturbing. Not that I really have good cause to worry. If it is the Minotaur I'm all set. In fact, I should hope that it's the Minotaur. If he came to me then I could kill him, it would make the whole thing much simpler and everyone could walk away happy. Except the Minotaur, of course. I wonder. He is, of course, half-human. Interesting genetic explanation there, I expect. In any case, would he have the human emotions that, say, I do? Would he feel sad upon being vanquished by a hero? Does he eat the raw flesh of human sacrifices because he was teased as a child for his unorthodox appearance and still suffers from the resulting self-esteem problems? When I return home in victorious triumph, people no doubt, will ask me this type of thing. 'Oh Prince Theseus' they will say, 'How did the Minotaur feel about being vanquished?' And I shall have to answer. Right now, I don't know. I wonder. Would the Minotaur consent to a short interview before I slay him? I could ask him questions about his emotions and personal life. How does he feel about leather jackets? What is his favourite colour? Is there a pretty lady Minotaur with cute little boy and girl calves at home? I don't suppose it's possible though. My Minotaur killing device is designed to take effect immediately. That is what the kindly merchant who sold it to me said. Wonderful man. Name of Honest Jack. It was really a grand coincidence that we should meet. He was down by the waterfront selling a new apparatus that one deploys to prevent rain from falling on one. I was on my way to the ship and cheerfully informed that I would not be requiring his gadget as I was going to the labyrinth which had, by all accounts, a very waterproof roof. He replied that the gods flew with me for, by chance, on that day and that day only he was also selling an amazing new device which guaranteed to kill Minotaurs instantly. He let me have it for a real steal, he said. When I told some of the crew members and my fellow passengers about Honest Jack and his useful invention, many of them scoffed at me. I think that they thought that Honest Jack was, to use a phrase, a 'shady character'. I disagree wholeheartedly with this statement. The very fact that his first name is 'Honest' speaks volumes to me about his true nature. How could someone with such a first name be called a 'shady character'. I can picture it quite clearly. He was born much as he was when I encountered him: in need of a shave, smelling of cod and fresh cash, peddling items of great use and I am sure that his mother looked his father and his father looked his mother and his father and mother and mother and father looked at each other and knew that there could only be one name for this kindhearted son of theirs and that name was Honest Jack. My boatmates did not speak ill of my purchase to my face, but I had a lingering sense that many of them found it, in some way, amusing. Of course, I say, let them... [Pause.] I say let... [Pause.] Hallo? I say... [Pause.] Hallo? Well, I say let them be amused! When I kill the Minotaur they won't find it amusing. They will think that I am a great hero and will carry me on their shoulders through the streets of... [Pause.] Hallo? Is there someone there? [Pause.] Hallo?

[Black-out. Lights up. THESEUS is wearing a three piece suit, glasses and dress shoes. He carries a ball of string, a suitcase and an umbrella. The string is wrapped once around his legs. Largo.]

THESEUS: Day six. Everything is still dark and I'm still taking right turns. Nothing has happened. It's worse than something bad happening. One always wishes for bad things not to happen for nothing to happen before bad things but, after a while, nothing happening is a bad happening. The screaming and things have stopped. I haven't been hearing footsteps or breathing either. Maybe I've just gotten used to it. I don't know. All right. I'm fine. No news is good news. That's what they say, isn't it? Of course, one shouldn't assume that no news is really good news. It could mean that one's messenger was intercepted by enemy forces or that they don't think one can handle the truth so they aren't telling one or it could just mean no news. No news. Nothing happening. And then it's just a matter of time? A matter of time until what? I don't know. A matter of time. A time of matter. Hmm. [Pause.] Humans are programmed to do things to have things happen to make things happen. It is physically possible for me to stop making right turns and walking around and just stay here forever, isn't it? But I couldn't do it. I need the next thing. I need the next thing. I need the next thing. And if the next thing is meaningless? Then I shouldn't need the next thing. I want something to happen. Anything. I need a change in the darkness in the silence a... Is that right? Is that logical? When I return home in victorious triumph, I plan to call all the greatest minds, the most successful businessmen, artists, manual labourers and I will call them to the castle and I will sit them down in a large room and ask them to sit in the room and do nothing, completely cut off from the events of the world. I shall, of course, record their responses and take measurements with electrodes placed around their bodies. Yes, I shall see what we can do about the human tendency to do things for the sake of doing things. We should know better, shouldn't we. And a monk! A monk! Of course, I should invite a monk. He'd be able to do it. He would be able to sit in that room in the castle and sit and concentrate on higher things while the bank managers and bridge-builders and professional baseball umpires sit waiting to get out and act. [Pause.] I'm bored. [Pause.] Think of the girl. I don't know.

[Black-out. Lights up. THESEUS is wearing a vest, dress shirt, slacks, glasses and dress shoes. He carries a ball of string, a suitcase and an umbrella. The string is wrapped twice around his legs. Allegro, sempre accelerando.]

THESEUS: Day seven--no eight. I was having a dream. I was in a lavish restaurant, sitting at a nice table and a waiter who, stereotypically, reminded me of a penguin came to my table and asked me what I would like to order and I didn't know. So, I asked him what the soup of the day was and he responded that it was split pea. Now, I am quite fond of split pea soup so I said that I would have the soup of the day. He wrote it down in a little notebook and scurried away. So, I was waiting for my soup to arrive when an old lady at the next table began to cry out. 'Help, help!' she said. 'Frank's choking! He's choking on his shrimp!' Now, being a hero and a prince, I am, naturally, trained in first aid. So, I went over and I said, 'Excuse me, Madame, could I be of medical service?' and she said 'Oh yes, please. Frank's choking he was just eating his shrimp and he started choking oh please save him.' So, I did the Heimleisch maneuver on the old man, the shrimp flew out of his mouth, the old lady thanked me profusely and I returned to my table. No sooner had I sat down than the old lady began to cry out again. 'Frank's choking again,' she said. So, I went over and, sure enough, the old man was choking again, so I did the Heimleisch maneuver on him again, the shrimp flew out of his mouth, the old lady thanked me and I returned to my table. When I returned to my table I found a bowl of soup but it wasn't split pea soup. It was tomato soup. Now, I don't particularly care for tomato soup so I sent it back. As I was sitting, waiting for the correct soup to arrive, a man in the back of the restaurant began to call out. 'Help! Help!' he said, 'Martha's choking!' So I went back and, certainly, there was a lady choking on some chicken. So I did the Heimleisch maneuver on her and returned to my table. When I returned to my table I found another large bowl of steaming tomato soup but by this time I was feeling quite hungry so I decided to eat it anyways. No sooner had I lifted the spoon to my mouth than both the old lady and the man began to cry out at once. So I decided to go to Frank because he was closer and,

as soon as the shimp flew out of his mouth, people all over the restaurant began to choke and cry out. So, I decided to go around the restaurant, from table to table, unchoking people as I came to them and all this time the waiter was at my table unloading bowls of soup onto it. Minestrone. Vegetable. Alphabet. And after I'd unchoked Martha for the second time I happened to glance back as I was walking away and I saw her take the same piece of chicken and ram it down her throat. They were choking themselves. They were all choking themselves. And all this time a penguin who, stereotypically, reminded me of a waiter was at my table unloading bowls and bowls of soup. Chicken noodle. Mock turtle. Potato. I don't know. And I went to him and I said, 'How can you serve soup when people are choking?' and he said, very calmly, 'Sir, you may note that many of our patrons are choking but none of them are dead.' and I said, 'What the Hell does that mean?' and he said, 'Enjoy your soup, sir.' and he scurried away. But I couldn't enjoy my soup, not with them all choking themselves around me and I couldn't help them all, standing on the wet carpet soaked with soup and them all crying at me: 'Frank's choking.' 'Martha's choking' 'Amanda, George, Ian, Sarah, Jim, Him, Her choking choking choking they're all we're choking help but I couldn't! So, I had to get out. Of the dream? Of the restaurant. So, I ran to go to the doors but to get out I had to make a left turn and I couldn't do it because that would ruin the whole system and then the Minotaur appeared and he thanked me for not ordering steak and he said that he did have feelings and perhaps he would consent to an interview after he ate me and the girl was there and I looked at her and she looked at me and I and she and she and I looked at each other and I needed inspiration but she shook her head started to choke and then the Minotaur laughed and I screamed and he screamed and then a wave of soup washed over us all and I woke up and I thought all right all right but what about the split pea soup? [Pause.] When I return home in victorious triumph, I plan to outlaw such dreams. They are detrimental to general mental comfort and disrupt the order of sleep.

[Black-out. Lights up. THESEUS is wearing a dress shirt, slacks, glasses and dress shoes. He carries a ball of string, a suitcase and an umbrella. The string is wrapped four times around his legs. Scherzo.]

THESEUS: Day eleven. I turned right on a turn and almost ran into Bobby today. 'Hallo?' I said. 'Bobby? Is that you?' He nodded, backing away from me. 'How are you feeling, Bobby, old chum?' I asked. He nodded again and kept backing away. I decided that I should make small-talk. 'Would you like some soup if it were possible?' He turned and ran away, straight into a wall, if my ears don't deceive me. But then he got up and ran away for good. I think, I think that he thought that I was the Minotaur, which would be a rather funny mix-up wouldn't it. He seemed quite thin. I suppose not everyone had the means to bring a suitcase of dehydrated foodstuffs as I did. Luckily, I have enough provisions to last me over a year. That should be plenty of time to find the Minotaur and kill it thereby saving both myself and my fellow human sacrifices, not to mention the potential human sacrifices of the future. They will be so happy when I have... [Pause.] Oh no. Even after I kill the Minotaur they won't be able to get out. No matter how much trail mix, dried fruit, tinned meat they have brought they will be lost and will eventually die of hunger and thirst instead of being killed by the Minotaur. Which is better? If the beast gets you, you get all the pain in a lump sum so to speak. Of course, you're dead so much if it doesn't matter, I suppose. But the other way, having your life slowly drained from you not being able to eat to move just the pain of your body struggling to survive when it can't possibly. It's worse. Much worse. And it's my fault. They would have died simpler, easier deaths, if I wasn't intent on killing the beast. It's my fault. My fault. I... [Pause.] Hallo? Bobby, Bobby? Is that you? Oh, Bobby, my dear, soup-loving friend, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make your death harder. You know I didn't. Old buddy. Old pal. You know I wouldn't do anything to make it harder for you. If you could find your way out. No, I suppose not. I'm sorry Bobby. Will you forgive me? Bobby? Oh, I knew you would. Of course. All right. Why, what are friends for? Of course I... Heh heh. Now, if you run into the girl. Yes, that one. The beauty. Really? I hadn't noticed that. Anyways. If you... Yes. If you see her, give her my regrets about the starvation. I'd give you some of my food but you know how it is. Tell her. Yes. Tell her that I love her. All right. Good. Yes, Bobby. Very good. Thank you. You're a real swell buddy. Compadre, as the Spanish might say. Yes. Of course. I'll see you later too. When I return home in victorious triumph, I'll set up a charitable foundation in your memory. Yes, I thought you'd like that.

We can call it the Prince Theseus Foundation. I know that that's my name. The full name will be the Prince Theseus Remembers His Old Soup-Loving Buddy Bobby Foundation for the Starving In Man-Made Mazes Everywhere. No. Why not? It wouldn't fit on a letterhead, Bobby. Yes. I do think of everything. Yes. See you later. Bye Bobby.

[Black-out. Lights up. THESEUS is wearing a dress shirt, slacks and glasses. He is barefooted. He carries a ball of string, a suitcase and an umbrella. The string is wrapped several times around his legs. Andante religioso.]

THESEUS: Day somewhere in the late teens. I think. Oh! Oh Hephaestus, blacksmith of the gods have mercy on me! Hephaestus? I know you're probably up there on Mount Olympus as we speak, making horseshoes or some other metallic thing along those lines and I know you probably don't get many prayers from people like me, which is really why I'm calling on you. Maybe you can afford to give some more individual attention? Oh great Hephaestus, I feel as if I've been forgotten. I expected the Minotaur to find me by now I want to get this all over with. Do you know what I mean about being forgotten? Do you? I thought you might, O illustrious Hephaestus. I mean, no offense, but you aren't really one of the, you know, high profile gods. I mean the other gods are in all the epics and such. You, well... I know you have the limp and everything but, well, between you and me, you could at least try to get out more. Try exercising those powers of yours. You do have powers, don't you? Other than blacksmithing. If that's all you can do, don't worry about it. Not that your blacksmithing isn't worthy of a god because, really, it is. I think it is. I don't mind telling you, you've always been one of my favourite gods. I used to always think to myself, in Sunday school, how Poseidon would splash about at the beach in the ocean all day and Zeus would go around, well you know what Zeus goes around doing... In any case, I used to always think to myself. There's that Hephaestus, a good practical god, reliable. If you need some... some... some hinges made on Mount Olympus, he's your man, uh, god. That Hephaestus, he doesn't suck up all the glory. Not that he couldn't. Not that you couldn't. I'm sure you could put all the other gods to shame if you wanted to. Well, except for Zeus and Poseidon and Hades and Apollo and Dionysus has quite a following these days. Heracles is pretty showy and he's just a half-god and... All right, I'm sure you could get a fair amount of glory if you really wanted it. But you don't need to prove yourself like that. No. No. So. Where was I? All right. Oh give me a hand Hephaestus, O non-glorious but still pretty mighty blacksmith of the gods! Now, you are married to Aphrodite. That's not too shabby. Of course, she gets much more publicity than you do. I've never been able to figure out why love is more popular than metalworking. But married to the goddess of love. Every sentient male in an indefinite radius has his sights set on her but you're the one she got hitched to, you rascal. You old dog. She's your girl, that Aphrodite. Except when she's having affairs. I guess she does that a lot. Sorry. Probably a sore spot. My mistake. In any case. All right. All right. Look, I really need some help here. If you could send the beast my way or send me the beast's way. Really, anything to speed up this process. One always thinks that one one is in control. I mean, I do have my life in control. Not like Oedipus or something. Whoa! Talk about something being out of your hands! But a little help. When one is wandering and wandering--and one always is--well. I mean, I don't know. Sometimes one can't pull it off alone. Anything you can do. Either way, when I return home in victorious triumph, I'm going to go to your temple and... Um... When I return home in victorious triumph, I'll build you a temple. It's about time you had one, isn't it? And thanks. Many thanks, O Hephaestus, old buddy, old pal?

[Black-out. Lights up. THESEUS is wearing a dress shirt and slacks. His glasses are gone and he is barefooted. He carries a ball of string, a suitcase and an umbrella. The string is wrapped several times around his legs and lower torso. Grave.]

THESEUS: Three days after I lost any idea of what day it was. All right. I'm fine. This isn't so bad. I thought the overwhelming stench of death and hopelessness and... I've lost my glasses. Not that it really matters. I couldn't see in the dark with the glasses. Practically, it doesn't make a real difference. But...

Well, it was nice to know that they were there. To know that, if there was something to see, I could see it. I have to rely on feel to get around. Speaking of getting around, I'm still making right turns. I am almost completely sure that I'm turning in circles but I cannot break the system. After all, it's all I have. They're all we have. The systems that we create that we have to create that we put so much weight in. Ways of doing of seeing of focusing dizzily on the material reality that surrounds us. There is more of course. There's faith and there's inspiration and there's muffins. What are muffins? Silly Theseus, you know what muffins are. They're little baked food things that one eats. They are yummy. No, that can't be right. Food is dehydrated and freeze-packed or whatever it is so it is light and portable. That's all I've been eating for the past ever. That's right. All right. I'm slowly forgetting the things that were before the labyrinth. It's only a matter of. I still remember. I remember a lot of things. I remember learning to ride a horse. I remember my last birthday party. I remember Honest Jack. My earliest memory is of my mother and myself walking in one of the gardens of the palace. And we were walking and there was my father, King Aegis, commanding an army. My father is a king, so it isn't too strange that he might be commanding an army, although I don't know what they would be doing in the gardens. If it were an official function with an honour guard, my mother and I would have been involved too. And I usually was taken care of by a nurse. That doesn't add up. In fact, the more I think about this memory, the more flaws I find with it. When I return home in victorious triumph, I shall have to sit down and figure out a new earliest memory. But I remember it all so clearly. Maybe I dreamt it. Now, I know that I had all sorts of experiences from when I was that young and I don't remember any of them. We all had experiences that we can't remember not just from when we were very young. As I see it, they never happened. They never existed. Things only ever exist in the memory. You cannot remember many things that actually happened. Name one. If you truly don't remember them, you can't. They are gone forever. They never happened. Things only exist in the memory. And the things like my memory, my dream, that never really happened? That never occurred in real life? They are as enduring, as effecting, as heartening. They are as real as the things we did and forgot. More so. I remember a lot of things. I remember the girl from the ship. The beautiful, wonderful girl whose name I'll never know. She is probably dead now. I remember watching her on the ship. I remember the way her hair looked. I remember listening to her laugh with her friends at another table. I remember almost speaking to her. I remember walking in the dark, thinking of her, concentrating on her to keep my sanity, focusing on her beauty. She is certainly dead now. I remember a lot of things. I remember the dream I had days ago, when I was starting to lose control. We kissed. I took her in my arms and we kissed. I've never done that. Not with her. Not with anyone. I. She. We. Kissed. I've never done that. Or have I? I remember the feel of holding her. I remember the look in her eyes. I remember the kiss. The kiss. It was real. I remember. I remember it. It was real. [Long pause.]

[Black-out. Lights up. THESEUS is wearing slacks. He has no glasses nor shirt and is barefooted. He carries a ball of string, a suitcase and an umbrella. The string is wrapped many, many times around his legs and torso. Finale.]

THESEUS: [Singing.] Oh, the Grand Old Duke of York, he had ten thousand men! He marched them down to the top of the hill and he marched them up again and when they were up they were down and when they were down they were up and when they were only half-way up they made a plethora of right turns. [Laughs. Spins around to his right.] Day! Day, night, mid-midsummer afternoon! Do I know? Do I care? Does anybody? Bobby, old chum, good to see you, it's a shame that you're dead by now! Ha! It's rather a shame that everybody's dead by now! Isn't that funny! Ha! But really, I haven't seen anyone else. Have you? Have you? Of course not! You're dead too! I can't see anyone therefore they don't exist. In all probability, they never did! Ha! That's not logical. What's going on? What's going? What's on? What? Ha! All right. All right. This isn't good. It could be worse but this isn't good. What's happening? Focus, focus. $A = B, A = C$ therefore $C = B$. All right. $A = B, A = C, A = D, A = E, A = F, A = G$ therefore $B = C, D, E, F, G, C = D, E, F, G, D = E, F, G, E = F, G, F = G$ and $G =$ a very yummy pasta dish. Spaghetti? Spaghetтини? Spaghetтиниwini? Spaghetтиниwiniwiniwini? Linguini? Fettucini? Macaroni! [Singing.]

Macaroni keep it up! Doodle yankee dandy! Yankee doodle keep it up and call it macaroni! Macaroni muffins! Yay! No, no. That's not right. It's not right. What happened? My system was flawless. Oh, the grand old duke of Yuck! I'm going in circles. I. I need to concentrate on reason. The light of reason. Logic. If I just keep exercising my mental powers they won't run away and be hit by an itinerant Rolls Royce. Ha! But seriously... Oh dear. All right. All right. $1 \times 1 = 1$. $1 \times 2 = 2$. $1 \times 3 = 3$. $1 \times 4 = 4$. $1 \times 5 = 5$. $1 \times 6 = 6$. $1 \times 7 = 7$. $1 \times 8 = 8$. $1 \times 9 = 9$. $1 \times 10 = 10$. $1 \times 11 = 11$. $1 \times 12 = 12$. Ah. I feel much better now. [Skats.] What? What? Hypochondriacs! Fried ribbons! Give me that old time poodle shoes! Gargling! Ha! Gargling! Gargling! Ha! Formidable! Cockayankeedoodledoo! Yay! Ha! Rattling vacuum nasal zebra! Zebra? Zipper! Yak! Xylophone! Witch! Violin! Umbrella! Tree! Snake! Ruler! Quilt! Pig! Orange! Nuts! Milk! Lion! King! Juggler! Ink! Horse! Grapes! Friend! Ear! Dog! Cat! Bed! Apple! CBAs my know I now! Ha! All right. It doesn't matter. It really doesn't. You know, the alphabet is a system just like turning right. A system of sounds. Words. Sounds. But what does it all mean! Have you ever taken a word and said it over and over or just looked at it on the page until it starts to look really really weird. It starts to be a sound instead of a word. Then it's only a matter of time. One day. Day one. Day. Day day. Strange, isn't it? It. It it it it it it it it it it it it it it it it. Day. Day it. It day. Day it day it it day day it it day day it day it day. It. It. Day. Ha! Think. In the beginning they weren't words they were sounds. We still have sounds that are just sounds. Bropalig. Eh? But then they started the systems. Ug says to Og, 'stick.' Og says, 'unh?' Ug says to Og, 'stick.' Og says, 'unh mung uh.' Ug says to Og, 'stick.' Og says, 'Oh! Stick!' and Ug womps him with it. Communication. [Skats.] I had a dream that I used to live in a castle and it was light and my name was Theseus. And then one day day day, I got on a boat and came here. Isn't that funny? Dreams are silly. That's what we in the psychology business would call myth. A way of explaining how I got here and what I'm doing here and such things. To think we could understand! Ha! What is also funny: realizing that one can't understand everything that's going on, you apply science to myth, realize that myth doesn't hold up that your logical systems don't hold up and therefore deny anything bigger than a multinational corporation! Ha! All right. Everybody, let's concentrate on the physical world! [Long pause.] Ha! Even I know it's going to crap out eventually! No I don't. It can't can't. Where am I based? I'm losing. I'm losing. Irrationality! All right. All right. $2 \times 1 = 2$. $2 \times 2 = 4$. $2 \times 3 = 6$. $2 \times 4 = 8$. $2 \times 5 = 10$. $2 \times 6 = 12$. $2 \times 7 = 14$. $2 \times 8 = 16$. $2 \times 9 = 18$. $2 \times 10 = 20$. $2 \times 11 = 22$. $2 \times 12 = 24$. All right. Good. Very good. [Skats.] Comprehension question number seven: a) Am I in control? b) Are you? [Pause. Skats. Singing.] Oh the Rand Gold Dork of Yuke he had men thousand ten! He marched them into a labyrinth and they never came out again! Of course, it is open to debate whether they were eaten by a Minotaur or just made a left turn and starved to death. They don't really need a Minotaur. I haven't seen it. No-one has. Therefore it does not exist. Or perhaps it existed once a long time ago but now it doesn't. Does it matter? The fact is we're all in here and I've lost my glasses. Did you hear the one about the three times-tables? $3 \times 1 = 3$. $3 \times 2 = 6$. $3 \times 3 = 9$. $3 \times 4 = 11$. $3 \times 5 = 20$. $3 \times 6 = 18$. $3 \times 7 = 21$. $3 \times 8 = 21$. $3 \times 9 = 9$. $3 \times 10 = 7$. $3 \times 11 = 481$. $3 \times 12 = 36$. No! That's not right! 3×12 is a paradox! Ha! Ladies and gentlemen! I give you the human condition! Ha! All right. I realize that it's all been said before. I realize that saying it's all been said before has been said before. I realize that saying that saying that saying that it's all been said before has been said before. Well, that's the way it is. Adam and Eve thought up all the ideas, I'm sure. We're all dealing with their mental leftovers. Yummy! Reheated concepts! Intellectual macaroni and cheese! Yay! Gone. It's all gone. I had a dream that I was in a giant dark maze and I could turn left and go up and down and half-way up and down and all over the place I was free to run about and get lost and I could take a lunch break as long as I wanted even on Wednesdays. And I dreamt that I was stronger than my systems and it didn't matter whether I was lost or not because if you wait a few thousand years, the maze will have fallen down and no one will even be sure if it ever existed, as they won't be able to see it. So I could concentrate on something more important on beauty on love. How could I tell because true beauty lies on the inside? No, Mr Chicken-soup-for-the-middle-aged-garbage-collector's-soul! Because everything is beautiful when seen with the right eyes! Sure scoff! Scoff! If you love something it is beautiful. True. Therefore if you love everything, everything is beautiful. And love? Not based on logic! Get rid of it!

Based on preverbal instinct stupidity! Oh I can picture it now, Adam looked at Eve and Eve looked at Adam and Adam and Eve and Eve and Adam looked at each other and God. Blah! You can abc yourself around every right angle in the geometry text without an ounce of it! Love! Pah! Unnecessary! No! 7! 5! 3! 902! 23! 647! 325 000 704! Bah! [Pause.] And now the system is at an end and there's nobody. Nothing. [Pause.] When I return home in victorious triumph, I will tell them. When I return home, I will. I. They. Them. When. Home. Return. I. Shall. [Pause.] Hallo? Hallo? Is there someone there? [Pause.] Hallo? [Pause.] I know you're there! It's about time! A matter of time! All right. Here I am. This isn't so bad. I thought the overwhelming stench of death and hopelessness... Hallo? Hallo? [Begins to scream and opens the umbrella. Black-out. Lights up on an empty stage. Pause. Black-out. Lights up on an empty stage. Pause. Black-out. Lights up on an empty stage. Long pause. Black-out.]
De Souza/Theseus/20

CHARACTERS:

FRED LONG: Mid-40s; freshly-pressed tan slacks, brightly-coloured, short-sleeved button-up shirt, clean-shaven except for a pencil-thin mustache; speaks with much energy and verve; at times, he will insert long pauses into his speech, and then string together a number of ideas in a long stream of thoughts; he will also quickly go from a normal volume to a loud voice then to a whisper.

THE INTERVIEWER: Late teens/early twenties; clean-cut appearance, glasses, cropped hair; sits to make himself smaller than he actually is; nervous, shy.

SCENE I:

[A small kitchen. A table, with a simple covering, with two chairs. FRED LONG is standing apart from the table, while the INTERVIEWER is standing next to one of the chairs. Late afternoon, spring]

FRED: Please... sit! As luck would have it, I do have a few....

INTERVIEWER: Uh, hello, sir, uh, I'm from the local community newspaper. I've been told that you are new in town, and being a fairly small town where everyone pretty well knows everyone else, the paper... aspires to interview all new neighbours.

FRED:[Pause. Then FRED smiles widely] Yes! Fine! Fine! Fair play, as I....

INTERVIEWER:[Pause] Uh.... super! [Timidly] Well, uh, let's start with what's your name-

FRED: Fred! Fred Long! Hi! I am fine, and I am thrilled! Yes!

INTERVIEWER: Uh.... Uh....

FRED: Tongue-tied? Send it packing! Ha ha!

INTERVIEWER: Uh: ... Mr. Long-

FRED: Fred! Fred Long!

INTERVIEWER: Yes! Yes... Uh, what do you do in the town here? [Checks his reporter's note pad]
You are working as the manager in the grocery store, aren't you?

FRED: Yes! I am! That is the..... Long and short of it! [Laughs]

[INTERVIEWER writes down the information.]

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so now, if you don't mind, Mr.-

FRED: Long!.... Long!

INTERVIEWER: Yes! Uh, Mr. Long, what did you do before coming to our town?

FRED: My past, eh?

[Pause]

Personal....

INTERVIEWER: Oh, um, that's okay. You don't have to answer if you-

FRED: Trainer. [FRED smiles. INTERVIEWER exhales audibly.]

INTERVIEWER: So, you worked as a personal trainer? Was that just before coming here or was it a while ago?

[Pause]

FRED:Number of years ago. I personally trained lots of people- old, young, large, small. And I trained them.... but I also... pushed them.... to be... better. Better. I... pushed them - pushed their limits, their musculature. But! But... also... I was there for them as their net - I was their net. I was their net, there to catch them when they couldn't... stand on their own.

INTERVIEWER: [Confused] I see... so did you keep with this until recently.... or did you-

FRED: I felt.... I could do... more. I could do more. And more could be done for my trainees, my clients, my.... people. It kept me up. It kept me up so that I slept not one wink. Night after night. I knew that I desired more.... More! MORE! It's been said "Wish is father to the thought," and I... wished.... to lead people. So I thought.... [whispers] "Lead people."

INTERVIEWER: "Lead people". How did you mean-

FRED: It meant that I.... needed to, wanted to, had to... inspire people, many people, not just a few, so that they could have someone to.... guide them, someone to push them, someone to push their spirits! Their.... spirits! To push them.... [whispers] to fly! I decided to.... grow.... to change. I wanted my words to reach.... further. I wanted to touch more people.

INTERVIEWER: So you....?

FRED: I spoke.... [whispers] and people came.

INTERVIEWER: You became a preacher.

FRED: NO! No. Religion? Send it packing. Too many leaders. The people I spoke to needed to be shown how to lead themselves by just one leader.

INTERVIEWER: Ohhhhh, so you were a motivational speaker.

FRED: "Motivational".... It is a word that is so.... You make filling people's spirits sound so everyday! I showed regular people that there was not something to be found outside themselves. People watch television, people watch movies, people watch other people hoping, looking for something coming. But I would ask my people, [As if speaking to followers] "What epiphany do you seek? When will it ever be enough? After which television episode or what film will you be complete or fulfilled? Tell me. TELL!"

INTERVIEWER: [Getting swept up in FRED's fervour] And they said?

FRED: They protested, of course. Of course! [Imitates people in a mocking tone] "Take away my escape?! Take away my companion?! Pah!" they shouted. "Bunk," I replied. "But me no buts! Do it!" I shouted. "Do it!" I pushed them. I pushed them! [Reaching a near fever pitch] I pushed them! [A grand sense of awe] And the light that radiated from them then once they let me push them. Oh! Oh, blue light - creativity, productivity, beauty emanated from them..... OH! [Swept up with these thoughts]

INTERVIEWER: It sounds incredible. How did all this work out for you? I mean, it sounds like you were on top of your game. Were you successful?

FRED: [Again grows to be swept up in the emotion of these memories] For a time, a paradise. But in time, a fool's paradise. Many soared, many flew. Oh so much blue light emanating. Oh, creativity! Clearing out of old bag and baggage. It was high time! Reason let go, rhyme danced, truths outed. Truth unknot her brows. I.... was their net, and more. I was.... their tower. A tower of strength. [His mood darkens] Then, sent me packing. Sent me....

INTERVIEWER: What? They sent you packing? Why? What happened?

FRED: [Lets out a long sigh / low moan] Ohhhhhhhhhh.... [Disdain and ire] Oh, short shrift. Oh, cold comfort. [Mocking imitations] "You have seen better days!" "Too much of a good thing! Tsk! Tsk!" "In a fool's paradise!"

INTERVIEWER: Mr. Long?

FRED: Sent me packing.... Sent ME packing?! An "eyesore"? A "villain"? The "devil incarnate"? [Tenderly] But.... I was their.... net. I was their net. I pushed them, but was there to catch them. [Hurt] I pushed them.... [Ire/spite returns] And then I was, with one fell swoop, by an unkind word, SENT PACKING?! If the truth were known! They sent me packing after I sent them.... After the blue light emanated from them so gently, so lightly....? [Shouts] And they "gave the devil HIS DUE"?! [Enraged] NO SIR! BUT ME NO BUTS! Wanted me tongue-tied! A blinking idiot! A laughing stock? No sir. No sir. [Pride] The blue light emanating.... [Corrects himself] emanated..... [Wistful though still indignant] emanates still. [Disdain] For goodness sake. They wanted me to dance attendance.

INTERVIEWER: [Slight pause] What did you do next? Did you have to leave? Were.... "they" chasing you or something?

FRED: [In a hushed, secretive voice] Laid low till the crack of doom. The game was up. Oh.

INTERVIEWER: What caused all of this, Mr.-

FRED: FRED!.... Fred.... Long....

INTERVIEWER:

[A little taken aback] Uh, Mr. Long, what caused this? [Earnestly, but becoming a little bit bolder, as if he has maybe stumbled onto a story here] Were you.... charged or something?

FRED: [Sighs as if patience is wearing thin] Ohhhhhh..... [As if explaining to a thick child] I was the tower, for so many-

INTERVIEWER: That was your goal, right?

FRED: [Not hearing question] -and many heard.... [Hand at chest level] Some needed to fly only so high.... [Spreads arms wide and looks to the sky] And some needed to be shown that they could fly high.... [Intensely enthusiastic] And some, a special few, needed to be shown they could become the blue light. The blue light whispered a secret special to only those few. [A fond memory] He could hear.....

INTERVIEWER: "He"? Who was "he"?

FRED: He.... was of the special few. I was his net. I pushed him.... Yes, granted, he resisted, he protested, he lashed out.... But still I pushed him. At times, more in sorrow than in anger- but still I pushed him, and was his net. [Happy] And eventually, eventually.... his doubt vanished! [Feeling the warmth of that moment] Into thin air.... As good luck would have it.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean?

FRED: As good luck would have it.... His blue light.... emanated brighter than any I had seen. His blue light filled.... the entire.... [Smiles] me. That tongue-tied me, that caused me to be a blinking idiot.... Oh, the grace, the beauty.... [Mood darkens; FRED becomes defensive, derisive, as if telling of someone's stupidity] But he thought there was a foregone conclusion! I initially laughed myself into stitches.... [Confused, hurt] but with one fell swoop.... [Disbelief and anger] A "foregone conclusion"? [Very serious] And, I might add, without rhyme or reason. [Snickers derisively] A foregone conclusion. [Wistful] That was the long and short of it. [Hard done by] Too much of a good thing. Oh, I had seen better days.... [Angry] But it was high time I set straight his "foregone conclusion".... [Righteous indignance] He was told to gather his bag and baggage and.....! [Pauses; then as if embarrassed] It.... still makes me knit my brows....

INTERVIEWER: Well, how serious were the charges? [Snickers with absurdity of next question] I mean, what did they accuse you of, molesting or sodomizing the guy?

[FRED visibly bristles or jolts at this question, and snaps his head around to stare at the INTERVIEWER. FRED then begins to speak, uneasily at first, but his agitation builds, until he becomes feverish, even close to maniacal.]

FRED: It made me knit my brows..... It made me.... [As if defending himself] Without rhyme or reason!.... Lie low! Lie low!.... Teeth set on edge.... It was high time!.... Bag and baggage!..... Slept not one wink.... More in sorrow than in anger.... The blue.... emanated.... [Anger at the INTERVIEWER] Oh, you. More in sorrow than in anger! [Explaining to stupid child again] His light. I was his net! [Pregnant pause. Then the INTERVIEWER speaks in a low voice]

INTERVIEWER: Did you do it, Mr. Long?

FRED: [FRED's eyes widen, then his face contorts into a look of indignance and anger] Oh no. No, no. No foregone conclusion here. Do not knit your brows. No, sir!

INTERVIEWER: What was his name?

FRED: [FRED becomes feverish again, distracted; begins to talk to self, as if trying to solve a problem] I have seen better days. I slept not one wink. I.... More sinned against than sinning.... Still more sinned against than sinning! More sinned against-

INTERVIEWER: [Calm, controlled, low voice] His name..... was James.

[Total silence, then...] Why did you do it?

FRED: [FRED becomes nearly maniacal. He lets out a low moan or shout as if he has uncovered a pleasant surprise by a friend.] Ohhhhhhhh..... [Pause. He laughs. Adopts a tone as if confused.] Ohh... Tongue-tied. [Overly dramatic tone of bewilderment] Oh, it's Greek to me.... [Resignation] Give the devil his due. [As if bracing himself with inner strength or fortitude] Let my blue light be an example for others. [Bewildered again.] Yet, without rhyme or reason.... [Then, has an epiphany about what is really going on here] Your question! [Angered and indignant, as he has just uncovered treachery] Wish is father to the thought. [Disgust] Ohhhhh. If the truth were known! Playing fast and loose. [Slaps forehead] I have been in a fool's paradise. Again! [Pause. Then, as FRED plays it out in his head, we see his mood lighten. He begins laughing at how silly he has been, as if he is now in on a practical joke.] As good luck would have it! [Laughs. Then points

to self] Hoodwinked! Fair play. [Continues to laugh then wags his finger as if he has caught the INTERVIEWER trying to trick him.] Laughed yourself into stitches. Knitted your brows. [Then anger begins to resurface] But, uh, too much of a good thing.... [Angry, loud] Laughed yourself into stitches? The game is up! That is the long and short of it. [Points at self.] Teeth set on edge! [Accusing the INTERVIEWER] Played fast and loose. [Righteous indignance returns.] No sir! Fair play. [Threatening in a loud voice] Make short shrift! It is high time! The game-

INTERVIEWER: [Cuts off FRED using a loud but measured voice; forceful] Why... did... you... do... it....

FRED: [FRED stops in his tracks. Has a momentary look of "not this again".]

INTERVIEWER:to me?

FRED: [Wide-eyed, shell-shocked. Eventually manages to whisper.] Tongue-tied.... [Describing the events that have befallen him.] One fell swoop....

INTERVIEWER: My name..... is James. [FRED is slack-jawed in disbelief. Falls into a chair.]

FRED: But-

INTERVIEWER: For goodness sake, but me no buts! [Accusing] Played fast and loose! [Instantly very angry. Points to self] More sinned against than sinning! MORE! Tongue-tied! Slept not one wink! I HAVE SEEN BETTER DAYS.... better days.... [Snarling at FRED] LAUGHED YOURSELF INTO STITCHES! KNITTED YOUR BROW! SENT ME PACKING! [Points at FRED and his surroundings; mock disbelief; disdain.] "Short shrift"?! [Pregnant pause. Then INTERVIEWER becomes teary-eyed and upset. As he relives his memories, he is languishing.] Without rhyme or reason.... [Then he turns on FRED again. Imitates him mockingly.] "My blue light emanating"?! Ahhhhhh! [INTERVIEWER becomes mad at himself.] In a fool's paradise.... Too much of a good thing! [Slight pause. Then, INTERVIEWER turns and springs on FRED, leaning right over him. He is very close to FRED's face, and he shouts; white hot anger.] It was Greek to ME! [Then, he stands up, takes a moment to compose himself. Eventually, he speaks in a normal voice.] It is high time. [FRED realizes where this is going and tries to escape. INTERVIEWER pulls a gun out of his pocket] Ah! [INTERVIEWER pulls a small handgun from his pocket, and delicately holds it in the air. FRED's eyes widen. He backs up to his chair and sits down. INTERVIEWER laughs in derision, then saunters over to FRED's chair. He begins caressing FRED's face and head with the gun - up one side and down the other for an uncomfortably long time. Eventually, he whispers in FRED's ear.] Tongue-tied? [INTERVIEWER laughs at FRED derisively, then steps behind FRED to where he can't see him. After a moment, INTERVIEWER speaks in a flat tone.] Give the devil his due. [INTERVIEWER then knocks FRED in the head with the butt of the gun. FRED slumps over onto the table. LIGHTS DOWN. LOUD MUSIC UP.]

SCENE II:

[Some time later. FRED is tied to a chair, with a handkerchief over his mouth. The gun lies on the table in front of FRED. INTERVIEWER is sitting at the table, writing, and FRED, his eyes wide with terror, looks to the gun, then the INTERVIEWER. INTERVIEWER notices FRED looking on, smiles, then puts his finger to his lips and makes the sound "Shhh". He then finishes writing, stands, then saunters around the room admiring what he has written. INTERVIEWER takes up a position a few feet away from FRED, who is watching intently, and INTERVIEWER begins to read. He speaks in an affected tone of sadness, with mock desperation.]

INTERVIEWER: "To.... whomever. A stone-hearted villain! A blinking idiot! The devil incarnate! Slept not one wink. It is high time. If the truth were known.... The truth must out. Cannot lie low till the crack of doom. In a fool's paradise... Sent me packing.... More in sorrow than in anger. It was Greek to me! It was! Played fast and loose... Hoodwinked.... Knitted my brows.... All for blue light emanating. It is high time. No short shrift. Oh too much of a good thing. Give the devil his due. Was not a foregone conclusion. Vanish into thin air.

More in sorrow than in anger,
Fred Long.

A blinking idiot."

[James then moves over to FRED and puts the pen in FRED's hand so he can sign the letter. FRED resists. INTERVIEWER raises the gun in a threatening pose as if to strike FRED.]

Ah, ah. But me no buts....

[FRED relents, and signs the letter. INTERVIEWER snickers in disgust, then laughs a hearty affected laugh.]

Now....

[INTERVIEWER then puts on rubber gloves. FRED's eyes widen, and his agitation grows. INTERVIEWER then performs a little mime act of shooting FRED, and makes one of his own hands go limp to indicate that it is FRED's hand that has gone limp in death. INTERVIEWER then goes on to mime placing the gun in "FRED's" dead hand and curling the dead fingers around the gun. After he has done all of this, INTERVIEWER smiles a wide smile, then mouths the words "Voila" as he strikes a theatrical pose. The smile then drains from INTERVIEWER's face. He picks up the gun, then produces a handkerchief and wipes down the gun, and the pen and the chair and everything else he has touched. FRED is very agitated at this point. INTERVIEWER then positions himself to one side of FRED, with his arm outstretched, the gun aimed at FRED's temple. FRED begins to shake. As INTERVIEWER readies himself, he has a thought. He leans in to FRED's ear and snarls.]

Slept NOT ONE WINK!

[INTERVIEWER repositions himself with his arm outstretched, and the gun pointed at its target.]

Now.... For goodness' sake.

[FRED begins hyperventilating under the handkerchief, and shaking violently.]

Tongue-tied.

[SNAP BLACKOUT, MUSIC UP.]